STEPHEN WOOD

An Illustrated History of

THE ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

THOSE TERRIBLE GREY HORSES

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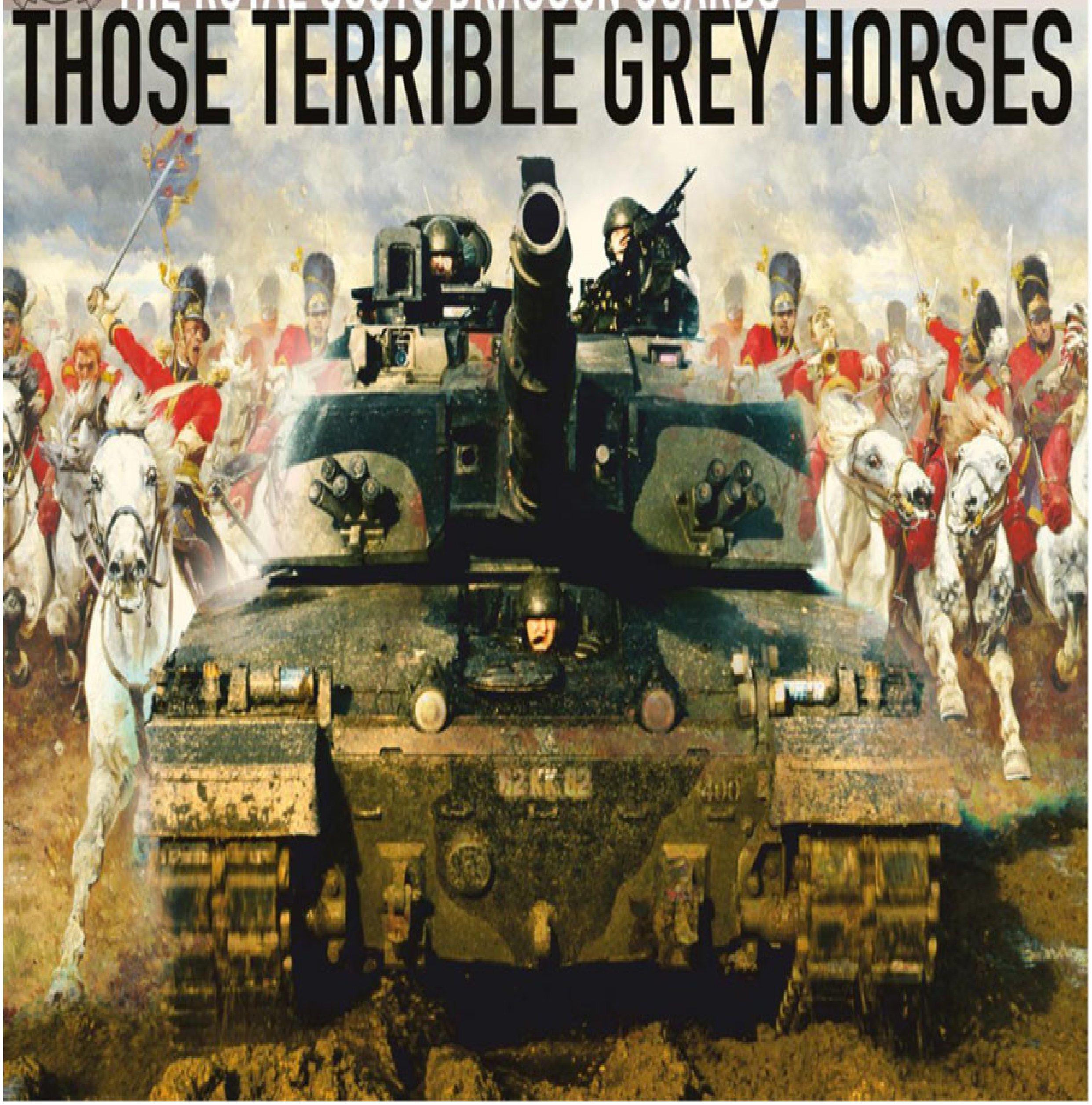

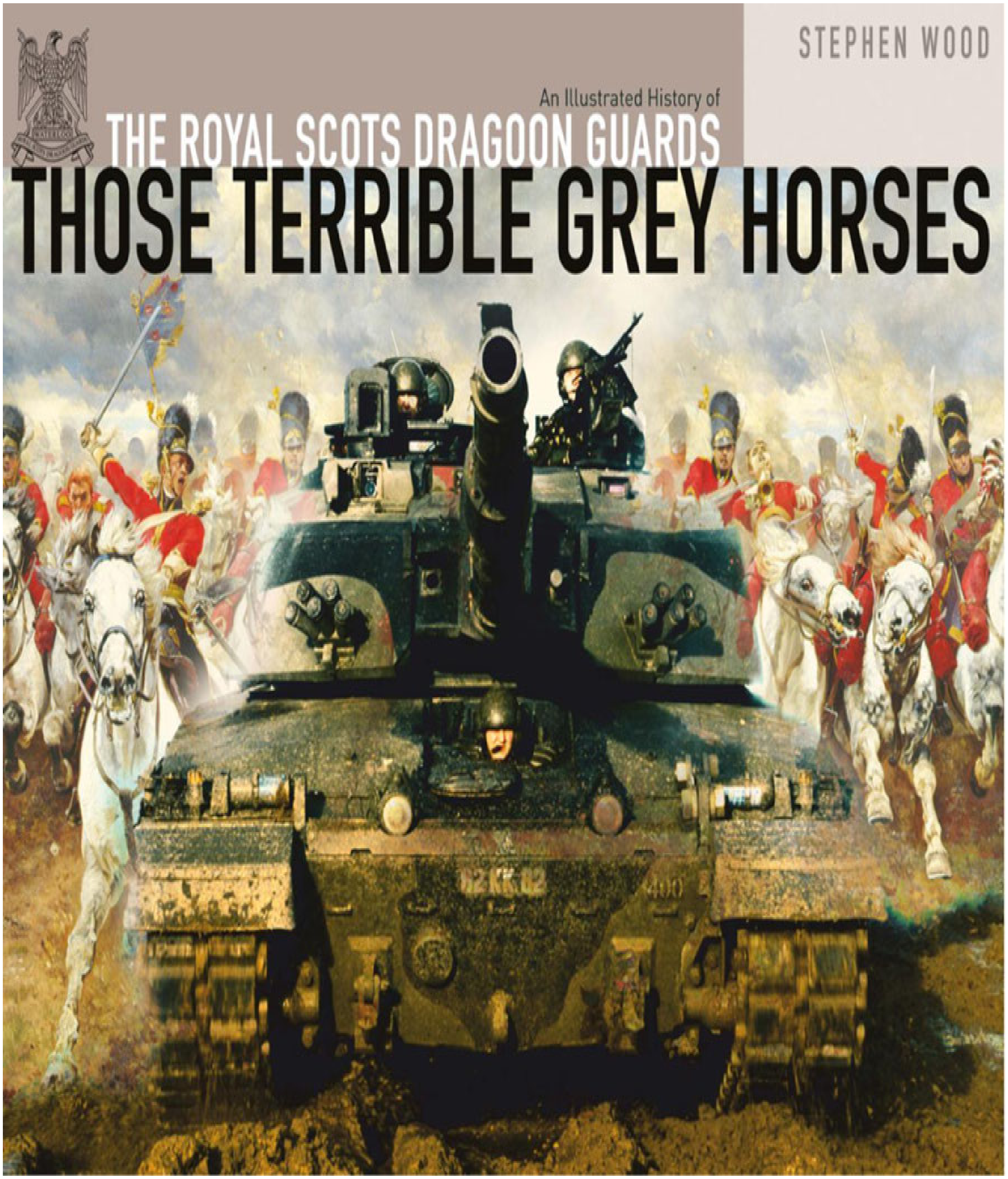

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An Illustrated History of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

Stephen Wood

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

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FOREWORD

6th Dragoon Guards in review with the band on the regiment's right; the surgeon, with the scarlet plume in his hat, is shown between the band and the right-hand troop; watercolour by Orlando Norie, 1865. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

At the time of writing. I have been privileged to hold the appointment of Deputy Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards for more than 20 years. This position has allowed me to maintain my close association with the regiment, after having served as an officer in the Royal Scots Greys from 1955 until its amalgamation in 1971. This is an honour which I value highly and it has enabled me to visit the regiment on numerous occasions, both on operations and in barracks. On each of these visits I have been greatly impressed by the positive attitude and spirit of cohesion which I have encountered among the officers and soldiers of the regiment. Their optimism is infectious and their mutual trust unshakeable: these qualities embody a regimental spirit dating from the late 17th century and which has been built over hundreds of years of service to the Crown, both at home and in the many campaigns fought overseas.

In this book, Stephen Wood has provided us with an updated version of his earlier work In the Finest Tradition which appeared in 1988 during the time that the regiment was stationed in Tidworth. Stephen has been associated with the regiment – and with our museum in particular – for many years and I cannot think of anyone better qualified or more suited to record our history. With the help of the regiment at large and other willing volunteers, the project team has put together a fascinating account, illustrated with many images that have only recently come to light and enlivened by an assortment of interesting and informative vignettes.

This book records the achievements of the regiment in the intervening years, years which have seen a considerable rise in tempo and operations on a scale not witnessed since the Korean War. The final chapter ends with a cautious look to the future as the world responds to the current threats posed by Islamic fundamentalism and despotism in the developing world. In their efforts to help combat these dangers, I wish the regiment every success as they change their role from heavy armour to light cavalry in what would appear to be just another turn of the wheel in our history. Whatever the future may bring, I have no doubt that the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards will rise to the challenges, bolstered by the justifiable belief that the regiment remains Second to None.

HRH The Duke of Kent, KG

Deputy Colonel-in-Chief

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

(Carabiniers and Greys)

INTRODUCTION

The gunner mans the heavy weapon station of a Jackal 2 armoured vehicle on Bergen-Hohne training area, July 2014.

The title of this book is taken from a loose translation of a remark attributed to Napoleon, made to his staff while witnessing the charge of the Royal Scots Greys at the battle of Waterloo: ‘Ces terribles chevaux gris! Comme ils travaillent!’ (‘Those terrible grey horses! How they strive!’). Whether apocryphal or not, the remark amply conveys the admiration of a professional soldier for the devastating shock effect delivered by massed cavalry – as conclusive a battlefield weapon in its day as was to be the tactic of ‘Blitzkrieg’ in the Second World War.

Thus the title; however, this book is more than a history book containing such stories. It is a historical portrait, a celebration and a commemoration of the past, present and future of one of the British Army’s most colourful and better-known cavalry regiments. Scotland’s senior regiment and her only regular cavalry, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and its ancestors have participated in almost every theatre of war involving the British Army since the late 17th century; even when not at war, the regiment has been stationed wherever British interests have required its services. Much has recently been recorded about the regiment’s exploits in Iraq and Afghanistan where, together with those of other regiments and from other countries, its personnel have made a significant contribution to the current war against terror. In this 200th anniversary year of the battle of Waterloo, this book provides an overview of the tapestry of historical events that have shaped today’s regiment. Building on Stephen Wood’s earlier work, In the Finest Tradition (1988), this book takes the story further and examines and illustrates the ethos and traditions of a regiment descended from three regiments that were raised to counter local rebellion in Britain. Packed with images and anecdotes, a clear picture emerges from its pages of the unending adaptability required of, and delivered by, the cavalry soldier. From horses at Ramillies, Dettingen, Minden, Talavera and Waterloo to tanks in the sand of North Africa, the mud of Italy and the steamy jungles of Burma; from trench warfare on the Western Front to the liberation of Basra, the pages of this new history of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards contain countless stories.

This book is primarily intended for the general reader who wants to understand and enjoy the regiment's story in its historical context without becoming enmeshed in the detailed complications and conflicting opinions surrounding politics and international relations. The story follows the men and their mounts acting as instruments of foreign and domestic policy at the most dangerous level. Life before, during and after battle is portrayed against the backdrop of world events. Pictures not generally on public display, artefacts from the regiment's messes and museums and vignettes accompany the lively narrative.

The book has been compiled by dedicated, expert and mostly volunteer helpers, to all of whom I am enormously grateful; above all, the regiment owes a huge debt of gratitude to John Ross, chairman of the Regimental Association, for stepping into the breach 'au moment critique' and leading his team with great tact and efficiency to deliver this final product. While acknowledging the unwavering diligence and extensive historical knowledge of primary author Stephen Wood, my particular thanks are also due to Charles Webb, former regimental officer and nationally acknowledged expert on military uniforms, without whose eye for detail and encyclopaedic knowledge this story would have been hollow. The regiment 'at large' and the Commanding Officer have provided huge support with photographs and advice on recent events while Jamie Erskine and his staff at Home Headquarters have played a pivotal role in taking care of the detail, leaving me to wave a big hand at a small map. Mick Stanley, another former regimental officer, also brought much to the table with his keen knowledge of the Army in India and an impressive technical ability to transform even the most dog-eared of photographs. I am also grateful to Bruce Ridge whose research into our more important pictures has been invaluable. There are many more to thank and their names appear elsewhere in the book, as do those of our subscribers without whose support it would have been extremely difficult to publish at all.

Brigadier Simon Allen

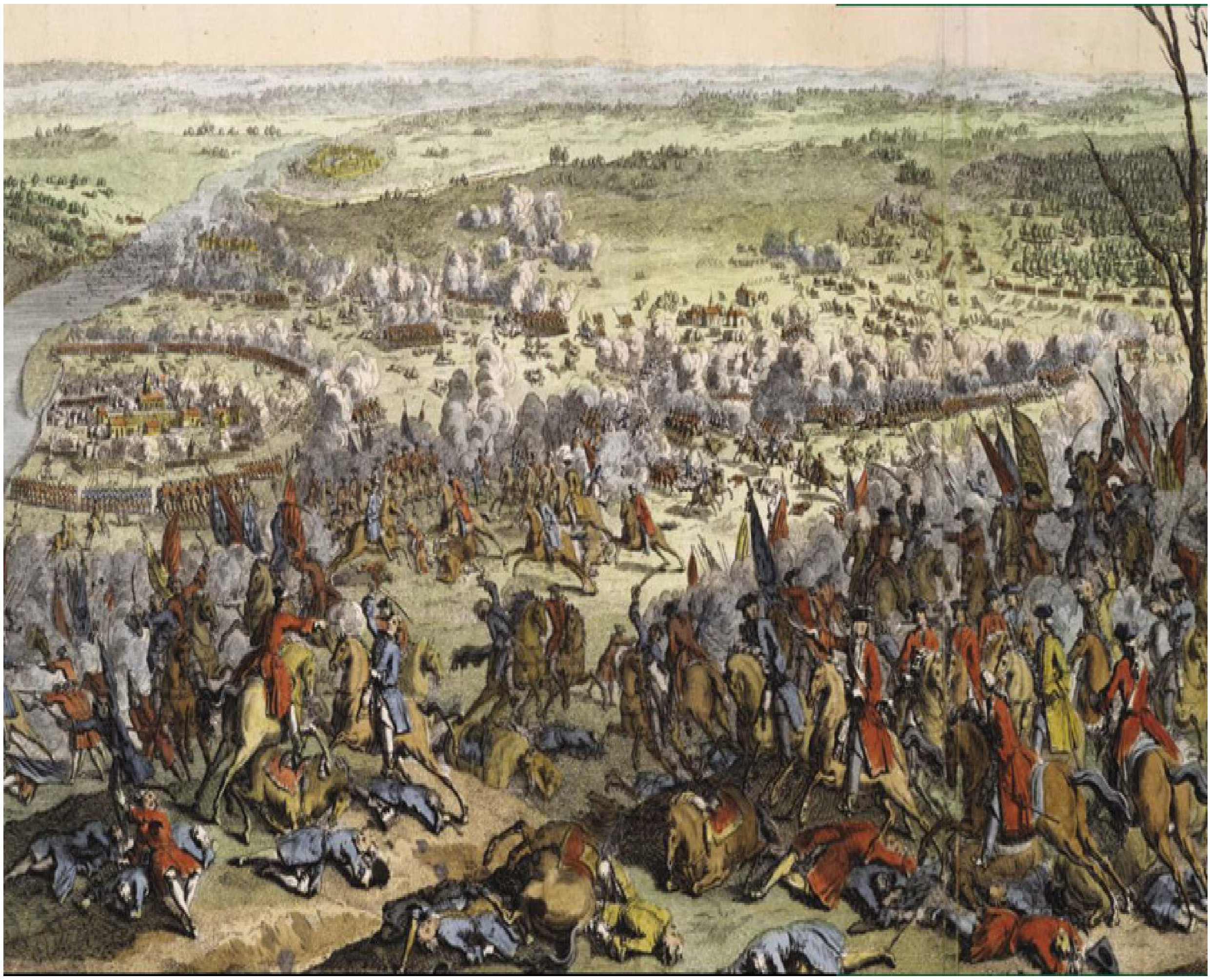
Colonel of the Regiment

15 January 2015

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER ONE

HORSE, CARABINIERS AND DRAGOONS, 1678–1763



The battle of Blenheim, 13 August 1704; a coloured engraving by Gérard Scotin after Antoine Benoist, published by Du Bosc, 1735. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

THE HORSE

The 4th Regiment of Horse was raised in June 1685 as six separate troops in the English counties of Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Middlesex. Each troop was commanded by a captain, whose subaltern officers were

a lieutenant and a cornet (the cavalry rank now generally known as second lieutenant). A troop consisted of sixty privates (each of whom had to provide his own horse), two trumpeters and three corporals; a troop quartermaster completed the muster roll. There were no sergeants in regiments of horse – a tradition perpetuated to this day in the Household Cavalry – because the rank, the title of which was believed originally to imply a position of servitude, was regarded in regiments of horse as one more appropriate to dragoons and infantry, whom the regiments of horse regarded as socially inferior forms of soldier.

The warrants ordering the raising of the separate troops of horse were dated 23 June 1685, scarcely more than four months after the accession of the last Stuart king of Britain, King James II of England and VII of Scotland. King James, who had, as a younger man, served in and commanded both naval and military forces, took great interest in his armed forces but shared his father's and elder brother's general disregard for the consequences of his actions and the views of his advisors. He was therefore overt about his Roman Catholic faith in an age when Roman Catholicism was associated by many in Protestant Europe, and in a Britain which was largely Protestant and moving inexorably towards notions of constitutional government, with despotism.

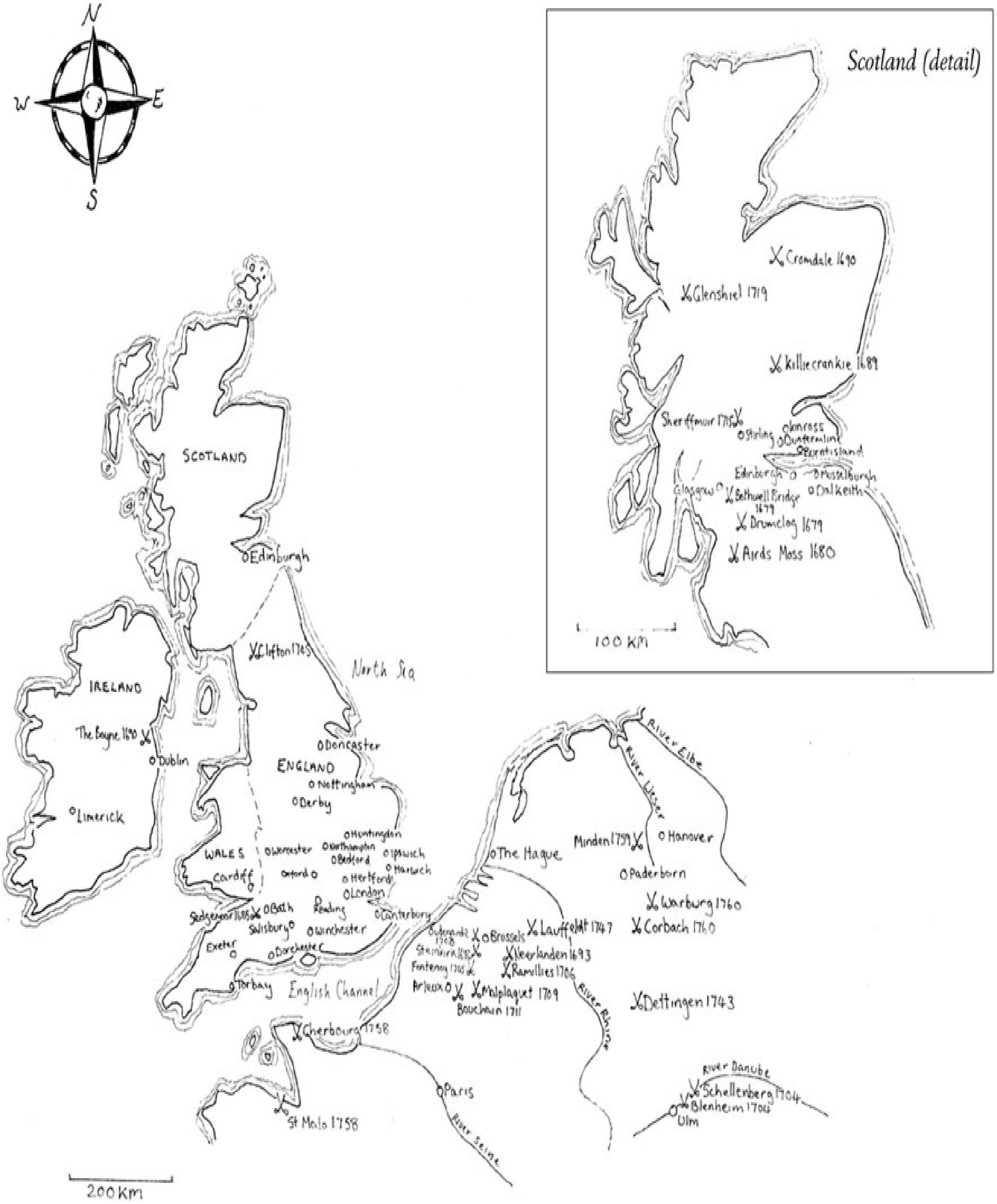
Earlier in June 1685, the King's illegitimate nephew, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, had landed in Dorset and begun a rebellion against his uncle. In historical retrospect, we can see that Monmouth's rebellion never really stood a chance of success, since it attracted little or no support from the cautious men of influence whose memories stretched back to the Civil Wars, but its advent led to the raising of many regiments that are still in existence in one form or another. The six troops that eventually became the 4th Horse were not engaged at the battle which ended the rebellion, fought on Sedgemoor in Somerset on 6 July 1685; the termination of that unequal and brief struggle was left to more seasoned soldiers. King James, however, had had a fright and had not, by that time, so alienated his parliament that it was prepared to oppose his wishes when he asked for a vote of money to keep some of his new army in being. Consequently, on 15 July 1685, the same day that the Duke of Monmouth lost his head to the axe of Jack Ketch the executioner, King James was able to sign a warrant appointing Thomas Windsor, 1st Earl of Plymouth, to the colonelcy of the 4th Regiment of

Horse. Lord Plymouth (c. 1627–87) had commanded a troop of horse during the Civil Wars and a similar auxiliary unit in the 1660s but was not a career soldier; he had held several governorships and in 1676 had been appointed Master of the Horse to HRH The Prince James, Duke of York, the future king.

Although the regiment was ranked as 4th among the regiments of horse for the next sixty years, it was more frequently known at the time by the name of its colonel. When the colonel changed – and the regiment changed colonels eight times before the practice finally ceased in the 1750s – the regiment's name changed. When the six troops were regimented, the number of privates was reduced to forty per troop and a major, an adjutant, a chaplain, a surgeon and a kettledrummer were taken onto the regimental strength. The kettledrummer was paid 3 shillings a day, twice the pay of a private but the same as that of a corporal (about £13 in the currency of the early 21st century). From the soldier's pay, however, would be deducted the cost of feeding himself, of stabling and feeding his horse and of replacing the standard items of his uniform.

After his accession in 1685, King James increasingly used his army for political motives, principally to bolster his position as a putative absolute monarch, to coerce his opponents and to cow his Protestant subjects. Towns that refused to accept the King's pro-Catholic measures found that they had regiments forcibly billeted upon them. Not only did they have to feed and house the soldiers, and their horses in the case of cavalry, but the towns also found, in many cases, that the soldiers had been created freemen of the borough, an action that allowed these unwelcome guests to participate in elections. In Huntingdon in 1688 soldiers of the 4th Horse were used thus as pawns in the political chess game that the King was playing with decreasing subtlety.

Great Britain, Ireland and north-west Europe 1678–1763


Scotland (detail)
Cromdale 1690
Glenshiel 1719
Killiecrankie 1689
Sheriffmuir 1715
Stirling
Kinross
Dunfermline
Burntisland
Edinburgh
Musselburgh
Dalkeith
Glasgow
Bothwell Bridge 1679
Drumclog 1679
Airds Moss 1680
100 KM
N
E
S
W
SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
Clifton 1745
North Sea
IRELAND
The Boyne 1690
Dublin
Limerick
Doncaster
ENGLAND
Nottingham
Derby
Huntingdon
WALES
Worcester
Northampton
Bedford
Ipswich
Harwich
Cardiff
Oxford
Hertford
London
Sedgemoor 1685
Bath
Reading
Canterbury
Salisbury
Winchester
Exeter
Dorchester
Torbay
English Channel
Cherbourg 1758
St Malo 1758
Paris
River Seine
The Hague
Oudenarde 1708
Brussels
Lauffeldt 1747
Steinkirk 1692
Neerlanden 1693
Fontenoy 1745
Ramillies 1706
Arleux
Malplaquet 1709
Bouchain 1711
River Rhine
River Elbe
River Weser
Minden 1759
Hanover
Paderborn
Warburg 1760
Corbach 1760
Dettingen 1743
River Danube
Schellenberg 1704
Blenheim 1704
Ulm
200 KM

The British, or ‘Glorious’, Revolution of 1688 tested the loyalty of much of the army, although several senior officers – including John Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough – had been negotiating with the Stadholder of the Netherlands, Prince William of Orange, for some time before he arrived at Torbay with a largely Dutch army in November 1688. William, King James’s son-in-law, was regarded by powerful Whig politicians in Britain as the Protestant hero who would save Britain from a despotic and Roman Catholic tyranny similar to that observed in the France of Louis XIV; these politicians were also confident of being able to influence William in their favour. Once William had landed and established a bridgehead, the trickle of military desertions towards him swelled into a stream – principally of commissioned ranks – and the impression remains that this gradual winnowing of leadership from King James’s army only exacerbated the general despondency within it. King James’s flight to France, where he was sure of a welcome from King Louis XIV – the absolute monarch whom James had sought to emulate – left his army bereft of the sovereign to whom loyalty had been sworn and it was thus a relatively straightforward task for Prince William to adopt the army’s allegiance, once it had been purged of Roman Catholics.

Thomas Windsor, 7th Baron Windsor and 1st Earl of Plymouth (c. 1627–87), first Colonel of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 1685–87; oil on canvas, artist and date unknown.

While the transfer of the British monarchy from King James to King William III and Queen Mary II in 1688 had been relatively peacefully achieved in England, it led to a minor rebellion in Scotland and a major campaign in Ireland. Although the 4th Horse was spared participation in these or indeed the earlier Irish troubles, it was involved in what came to be regarded as the first Jacobite rebellion in Scotland. Commanded by John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, a small and far from homogeneous force of Highlanders and other disaffected Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Scots was pursued through Highland Scotland in 1689 by a government army that included the 4th Horse. The regiment, unused to campaigning at all, and especially not in the inhospitable climate of northern Scotland, gradually depleted its resources and was recuperating in Lowland Scotland when Dundee's Highlanders cut up the government forces at the battle of Killiecrankie in July 1689. The regiment did, however, form part of the reinforcements which, aided by the death of Dundee at Killiecrankie, rolled up the rebellion relatively quickly.

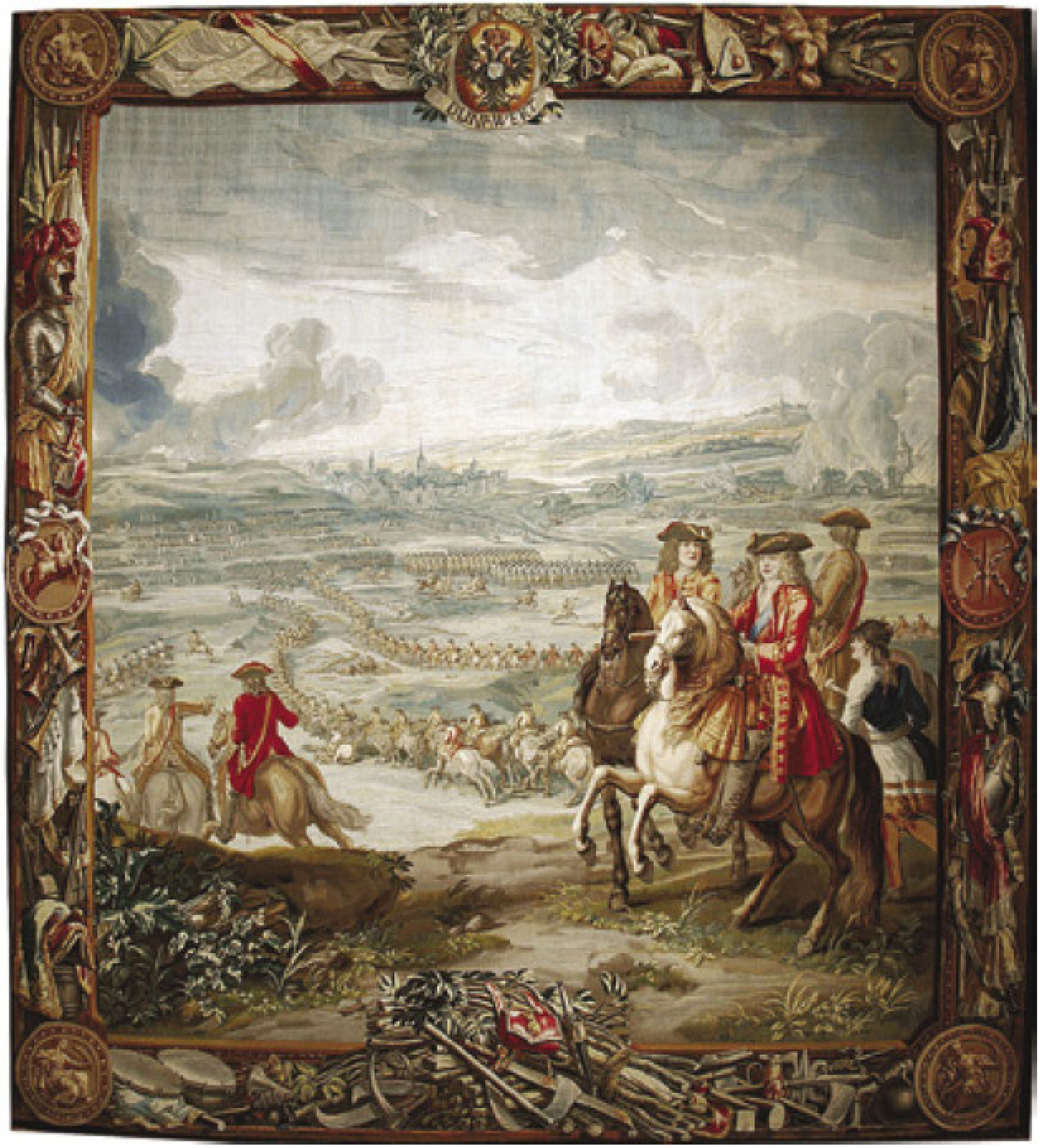
The accession to the British throne of King William III and his consort Queen Mary II, apart from securing the Protestant succession and the gradual development of constitutional government, brought Britain immediately into the front line in a long period of war with France. For King William, the acquisition of Britain and its armed forces meant that he was at last able to turn the flank of Louis XIV and use British soldiers alongside his Dutch troops to help him resist what was at the time the most powerful land force in Europe: the French army. In 1691, therefore, the 4th Horse was transferred to Flanders in preparation for King William's spring offensive of 1692 against France and its allies. The regiment was stationed in the Low Countries until the Peace of Ryswick in 1697 ended the Nine Years War. In the intervening five years it had been involved in sieges, and in relieving sieges, in small-scale skirmishes and ground-shaking, knee-to-knee cavalry actions, as at Neerlanden in July 1693. Throughout the whole campaign, Flanders had lived up to its reputation as a dispiriting place in which to conduct a war: the land was poor, the climate depressing, the resupply of materiel infrequent and the pay intermittent. The 4th Horse's return to Britain in 1697 must have seemed a welcome relief, despite the inevitable reduction in size of the regiment that was ordered by Parliament immediately upon the cessation of hostilities.

From its wartime strength of just less than 300 officers and men, the regiment reduced to a peacetime establishment of 230. For the next five years its duties were domestic and ceremonial, centred on the court – which moved as the king moved – until King William's death in 1702.

In 1701 King James II and VII died in exile at St Germain-en-Laye and his son, Prince James Francis Edward Stuart, later known as 'The Old Pretender', was immediately recognised by Louis XIV as rightful king of Great Britain. Prince James's birth in June 1688 had provided a male heir for King James and created the probability of a Roman Catholic dynasty occupying the British throne; it had been a significant factor in generating the invitation sent by British Whig politicians to Prince William of Orange in 1688 which had led to the 'Glorious' Revolution in that year. French recognition of Prince James as king of Great Britain was in direct contravention of the terms of the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697 and, added to Louis XIV's machinations concerning the succession to the Spanish throne of his grandson, provided ample cause for the resumption of the war: the 4th Horse embarked for the European continent again in March 1702 to participate in the War of the Spanish Succession. After two years of being stationed in Flanders, the regiment took part in the Duke of Marlborough's march to the Danube, a trek of 250 miles in six weeks, which culminated in the successful battles of the Schellenberg and of Blenheim in July and August 1704. No accurate returns appear to have been kept of the other ranks of the 4th Horse who were killed or wounded in these two actions, the second of which subsequently became the regiment's first battle honour (granted in 1882), but it is recorded that two officers and forty-seven horses perished at Blenheim, with five officers sustaining wounds.

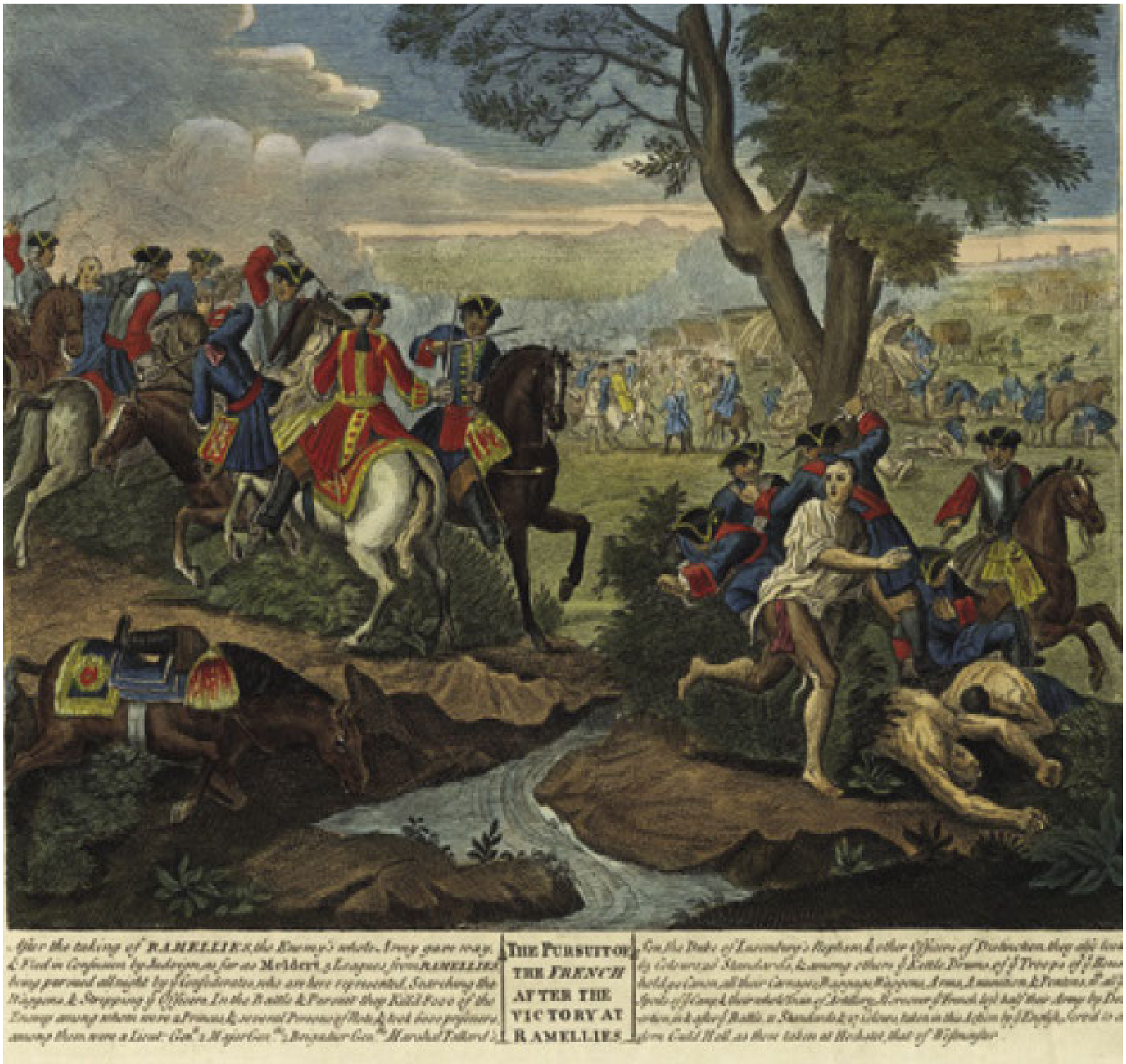
After another two years of feinting at the French defensive lines, of skirmishes and of marching and counter-marching, the 4th Horse was engaged at the battle of Ramillies in May 1706 against a combined army of French, Spanish and Bavarian soldiers. As well as obtaining another battle honour – also granted in 1882 – the regiment is said to have captured the standard and kettledrums of the Elector of Bavaria's Guard; unfortunately, no record of the fate of these trophies exists today. A further successful battle was fought at Oudenarde in July 1708, on which occasion the men of the 4th Horse were apparently equipped with steel, supposedly pistol-proof, breastplates. The regiment's use of armour had been intermittent since its foundation and breastplates had not been brought when it embarked in 1702. Despite the protection provided by these steel cuirasses, they were uncomfortable and were said to interfere with the free movement of the sword arm. A fourth battle honour followed (in 1882) for participation at the Pyrrhic victory of Malplaquet in September 1709 and, for the following four years, the regiment was engaged, with the rest of the army, in laying successful sieges to a series of towns on the French border. After the end of the war, in 1713, the regiment returned home and was again reduced in size.

The death of Queen Anne in 1714 was followed by the accession of the Elector George of Hanover as King George I and by the outbreak of another Jacobite rebellion in Scotland and north-west England. Western England, especially Lancashire, seems to have been the traditional power base of Jacobitism south of the Scottish border and in 1715 the 4th Horse was ordered to investigate a nest of Jacobite rebels reported to exist in Bath: a few citizens were persuaded to help the soldiers with their enquiries and several caches of weapons were discovered and impounded. The Jacobite debacle of 1715 had not killed the movement, however, and the next three or four decades in Britain were to be characterised by frequent Jacobite scares. Although occasionally justified, these scares chiefly resulted in Scotland and things Scottish being deeply distrusted by government supporters in England (who tended to ignore the fact that few Scots actually had active Jacobite sympathies). The Colonel of the 4th Horse from 1717 to 1748 was General, later Field Marshal, George Wade MP (1673–1748) who, as Commander-in-Chief in Scotland from 1725 to 1740, did his bit, by encouraging fort and road building, to bring the Highlands within reach of the redcoats' bayonets and the government authority they symbolised. The regiment was involved on the fringes of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745–46 and briefly in action at Clifton near Penrith in December 1745.



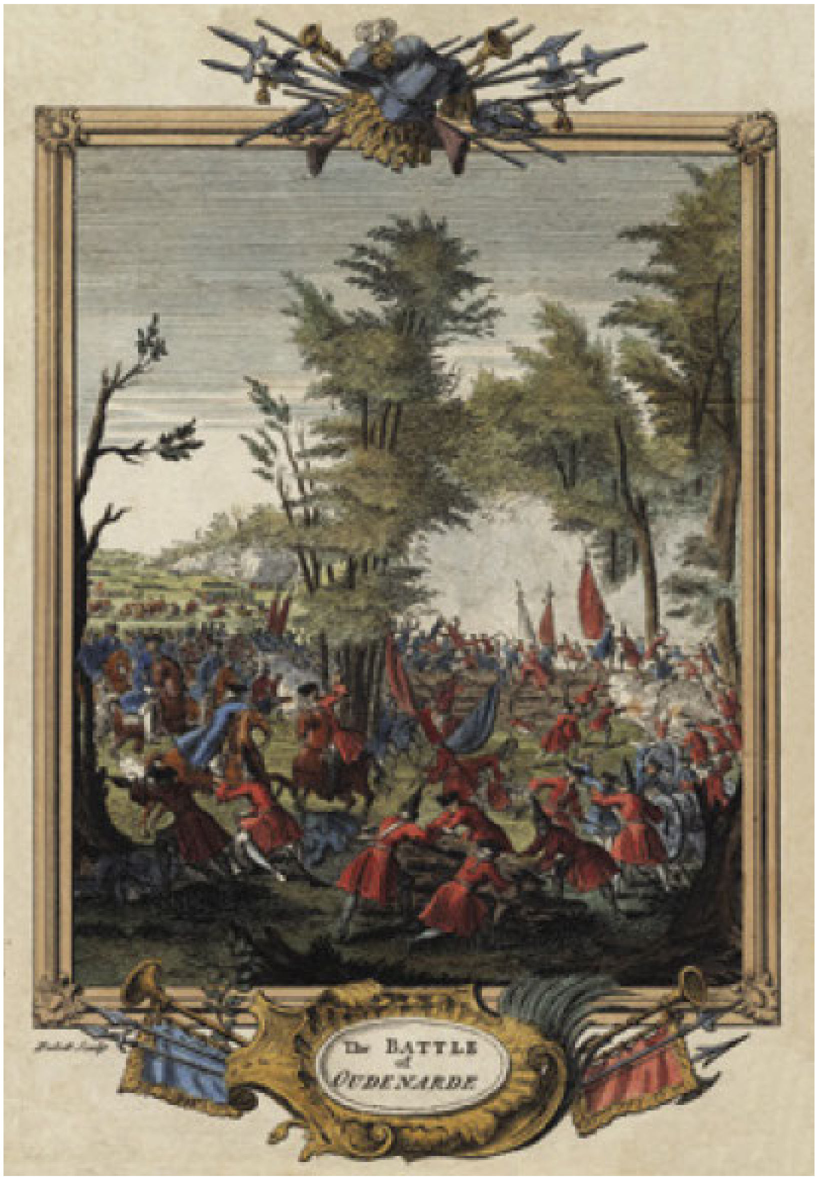
The battle of the Schellenberg at Donauwörth ('Dunawert'), 2 July 1704; cavalrymen on greys are depicted galloping towards the Schellenberg with fascines across their saddlebows; tapestry woven by Josse de Vos after Lambert de Hondt, c. 1712–17. (Reproduced with the

kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Marlborough, Blenheim Palace Image Library)


THE PURSUIT OF THE FRENCH AFTER THE VICTORY AT RAMELLIES

The battle of Ramillies, 23 May 1706; coloured engraving by James Hulett, mid-18th century. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

King George II, who had succeeded his father in 1727, was a monarch whose interest in his army amounted almost to interference but whose memory later generations of military costume historians have had cause to bless since the engravings and paintings that the King and his son, HRH The Prince William, Duke of Cumberland, commissioned in the 1740s and 1750s remain the only reliable contemporary record of how British soldiers were dressed and equipped at that time.



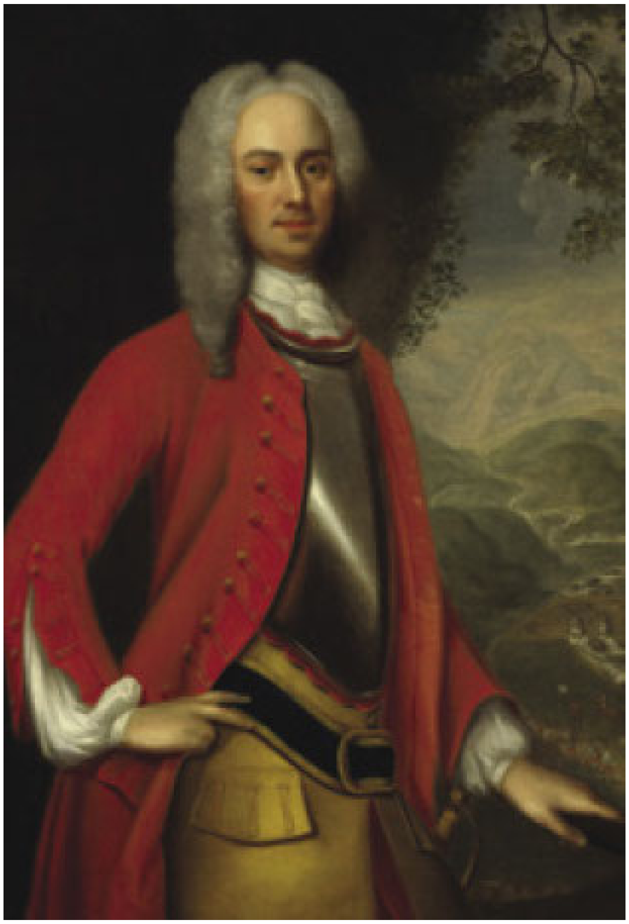
The battle of Oudenarde, 11 July 1708; coloured engraving by James Hulett, mid-18th century. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

Towards the end of the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740–48, in which the 4th Horse took no part, George II was forced to heed the arguments of his economic advisors and to agree to cost-saving changes in the army. In 1746, three of the four regiments of horse on the British military establishment were converted to dragoons: dragoons were paid less than horse and rode smaller horses that were cheaper to buy, replace and feed. The change in titular status did not affect the regiment’s role as heavy cavalry, dragoons having ceased to fight as mounted infantry about thirty years previously. To soften the blow, and also to give the three regiments affected seniority in precedence over the existing regiments of dragoons, King George decreed that they would be entitled ‘dragoon guards’; serving officers were compensated for their loss of pay. Thus, the regiment for so long ranked as the 4th Horse was regraded as the 3rd Dragoon Guards; the 2nd and 3rd Horse became 1st and 2nd Dragoon Guards respectively and the 1st Horse became the Royal Horse Guards. Ironically though, by being downgraded in status to that of dragoons, the three new regiments of dragoon guards lost precedence to the remaining four regiments of horse, all of which had been junior in precedence to them prior to 1746. This situation lasted for the following forty years and its effect on another component of today’s regiment will be shown in the section of this chapter on the Carabiniers.

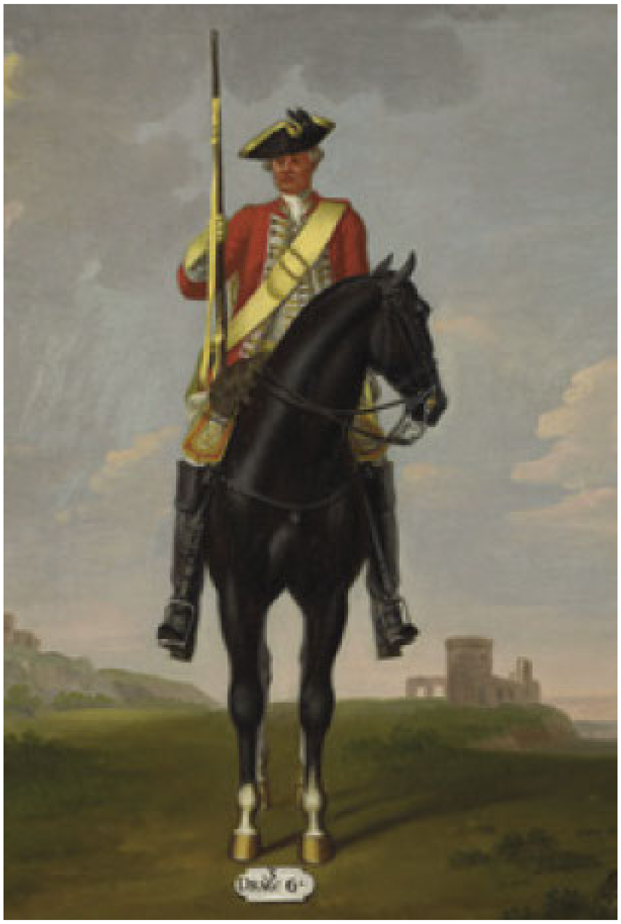
Domestic duties continued for the regiment prior to the outbreak of the Seven Years War in 1756 and took the form of tours of duty both inland and on the coast of Britain at a time when no police force existed and the perceived threat of further Jacobite rebellions, with their potential fifth columns, remained. In 1755, war being imminent, the regiment was brought up to strength by the addition of 100 men and, shortly afterwards, a ‘light troop’ was added to the existing six troops. This latter troop was the result of British observation of the success of continental European light cavalry – in the skirmishing, reconnaissance and other roles demanding swift and unencumbered movement – during the War of the Austrian Succession. In

May 1758 the regiment’s light troop, comprising about seventy men of all ranks, was brigaded with eight similar troops from other dragoon guard and dragoon regiments (including the light troop of the Greys) for an offensive operation against St Malo on the French Channel coast. The operation against St Malo was of limited success but the next expedition – to Cherbourg in August 1758 – which appears also to have involved the regiment’s light troop resulted in the destruction of that port and the capture of a large quantity of cannon; the light troop is said to have passed the remainder of the war as part of the garrison of Windsor Castle. The establishment of the light troops of dragoon guards and dragoons, all of which were disbanded at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, led in 1759 to the raising of specific regiments of light dragoons, the descendant regiments of which still exist.

The regiment as a whole arrived in Germany in 1758 but saw little action until the battles of Corbach and Warburg in 1760. It sustained considerable losses at the former engagement but minimal ones and a battle honour (granted in 1909) at the latter. The winter of 1760 was passed in quarters in Paderborn, an area that would become familiar to British regiments in the half-century following the ending of the Second World War, and for the following two years of the war the 3rd Dragoon Guards were occupied in relatively small-scale actions and skirmishes.



Field Marshal George Wade (1673–1748), Colonel of 4th Horse and 3rd Dragoon Guards 1717–48; oil on canvas attributed to Johan van Diest, c. 1731. (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



A private of 3rd Dragoon Guards; oil on canvas by David Morier, 1751. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014)

The regiment returned home, to quarters in Canterbury, early in 1763 to have its establishment reduced and its light troop disbanded. The potential of light cavalry had not gone unnoticed, however, even if its use had been a little uncoordinated, so each cavalry regiment, or at least those which had contributed a light troop to the brigade, was instructed to arm and equip eight men per troop as light cavalrymen. In real terms, all this meant was that they were trained in reconnaissance and skirmishing and reduced in armament to just a sword and pair of pistols (which they had to be able to load and fire while moving); their uniforms and mounts remained unchanged.

THE CARABINIERS

The 9th Regiment of Horse dates its existence from June 1685 and for the same reason as that of the 4th Horse: Monmouth's rebellion in the south-west of England. The six troops, originally independent but regimented after the end of the rebellion, were rather more scattered in origin than those of the 4th Horse, coming from Hampshire, Nottinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Doncaster in Yorkshire, Suffolk and, probably, Devon. The 9th Horse was regimented on 30 July 1685 and, as in the other regiments of horse, each man was armed and equipped with a cuirass, a steel helmet (probably with ear, neck and nose protection), a pair of pistols, a sword and a carbine. The carbine, a weapon whose name was shortly to become so closely associated with the regiment, was a short musket of smaller bore than the infantryman's musket. Carbines had been issued to regiments of horse since the early 1670s and were not, in 1685 or later, unique to the 9th Horse.

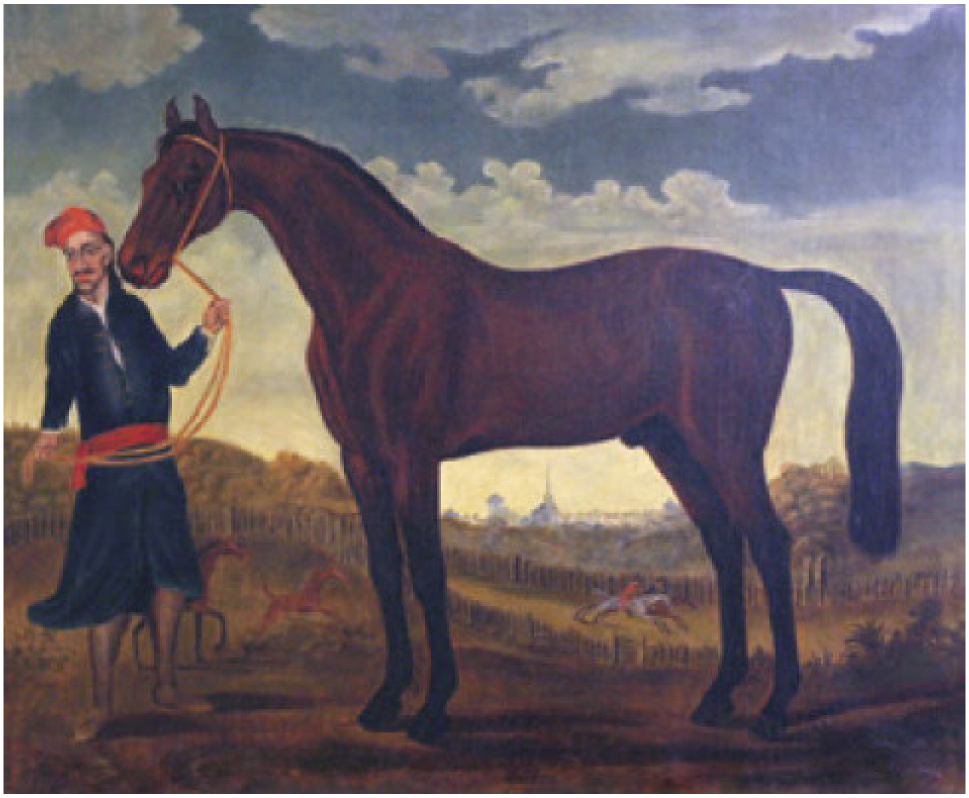
Richard Lumley, 1st Baron and 1st Viscount Lumley, 1st Earl of Scarbrough (1650–1721), first Colonel of 6th Dragoon Guards, 1685–87; oil on canvas, artist unknown. (National Trust)

Like the 4th Horse, the 9th underwent frequent changes of title as its colonels changed between 1685 and the 1750s (seventeen colonels in more than sixty years) but these changes were further complicated by the array of other names by which the regiment was also known in the same period. Its first Colonel – Richard, Lord Lumley (1650–1721) – had been Master of the Horse and Treasurer to King Charles II's queen, Catherine of Bragança; after King Charles's death in 1685, his widow was known as The Queen Dowager. Because of this association, the regiment was accorded the title 'The Queen Dowager's Regiment of Horse' in 1685 and retained it until 1692, despite the fact that Lumley had been dismissed from its colonelcy after eighteen months.

Lumley's independent troop, raised in Hampshire, was engaged in the mopping-up operations after the battle of Sedgemoor in 1685 and was responsible for the Duke of Monmouth's capture and transportation to London. The colonelcy of the 9th was Lumley's reward but he found the atmosphere of James's court uncongenial, disagreed publicly with the King's religious policies and was consequently dismissed in January 1687. By the time of his dismissal, Lumley was already corresponding secretly with Prince William of Orange, who created him 1st Earl of Scarbrough shortly after becoming king in 1688; in 1689 Lord Scarbrough was given the colonelcy of the 1st Troop of Horse Guards as a mark of King William's confidence in his loyalty.

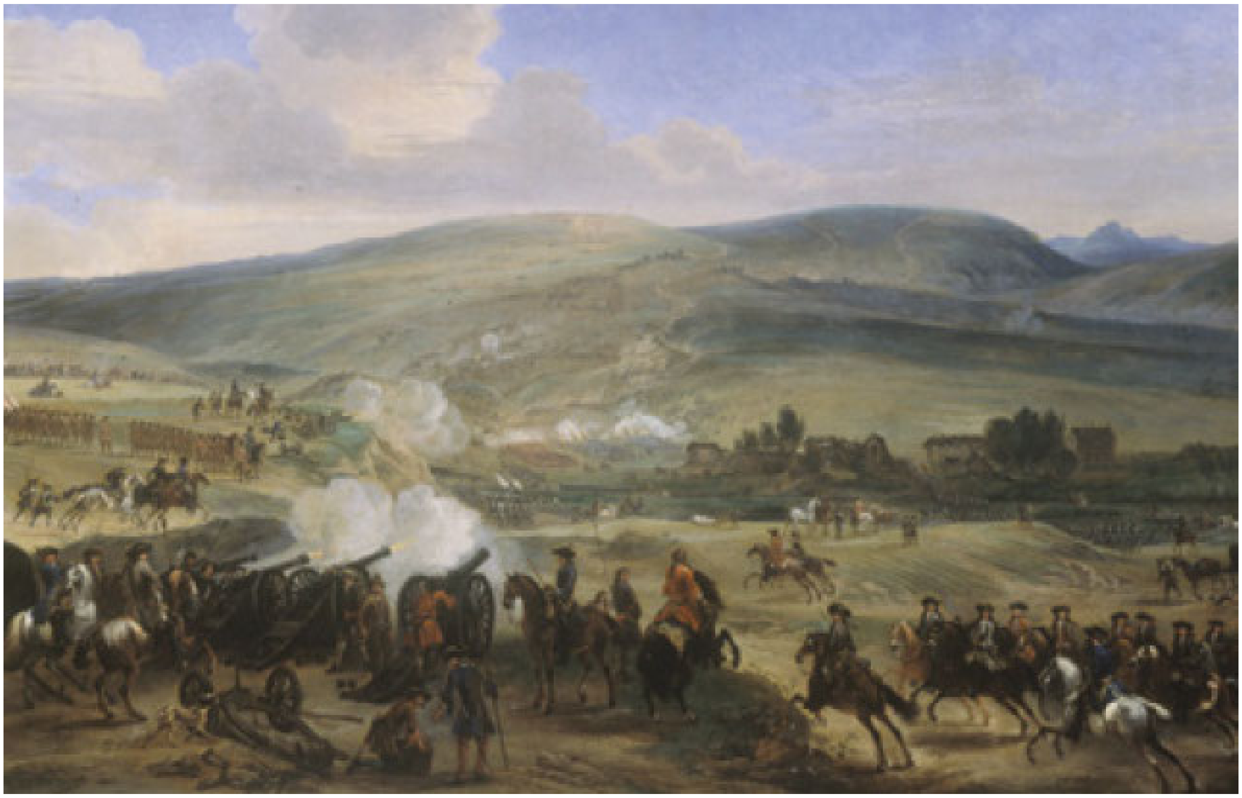
The Doncaster troop of the regiment was raised by Robert Byerley (c. 1660–1714), who was commissioned captain in the regiment in consequence. Byerley's family had supported King Charles I during the Civil Wars (1642–51) and Byerley is said to have fought in the army of the Austrian empire against the Turks at the siege of Vienna in 1683. Although his earlier military service would have fitted him for command of a troop of horse in the British army at the time, his undoubted eye for bloodstock would have reinforced that qualification: Byerley remains famous in racing circles for the contribution that his horse, a large Turkoman stallion known as the ‘Byerley Turk’ and acquired as booty from the defeated Turks after the failure of their siege of Vienna, made to the bloodline of British racehorses. Together with two other stallions (both smaller than the Byerley Turk and both Arabs – the ‘Darley Arabian’ and the ‘Godolphin Arabian’), Byerley’s famous horse was the ancestor of all modern thoroughbred racehorses. Byerley became the 9th’s Lieutenant-Colonel and then its Colonel in 1689, serving with the regiment in Ireland 1689–91. It is said that the speed of his mount saved him from capture just before the battle of the Boyne on 1 July 1690; he remained in the regiment until 1692.

The regiment saw its first active service during the campaign in Ireland between 1689 and 1691. Viscount Dundee’s 1689 Jacobite rebellion in Scotland, against which the 4th Horse was deployed, was little more than a sideshow by comparison with the reaction that James’s expulsion from the British throne in 1688 provoked in Ireland. The island was, of course, ideally situated for foreign-aided insurrection against Britain in that it was under-garrisoned and possessed a disaffected Roman Catholic population generally ready to rise and support any foreign invader; to the great delight of France and frustration of King William, the rebellion in Ireland tied up considerable British forces throughout the two-year struggle. After several uncomfortable months in Ireland, foraging for supplies from the land and sustaining numerous casualties through both inadequate protection from the almost incessant rain and poor or non-existent quarters while on campaign, the regiment eventually formed part of King William’s forces which faced those of King James at the battle of the Boyne in July 1690. In the same year as the Boyne, the 9th Horse was advanced up the order of precedence of the regiments of horse to become the 8th Horse. After the Boyne, an attempt was made to take Limerick by storm; after that, several months of anti-guerrilla warfare followed against those supporters of King James who had taken to the hills to continue his cause.



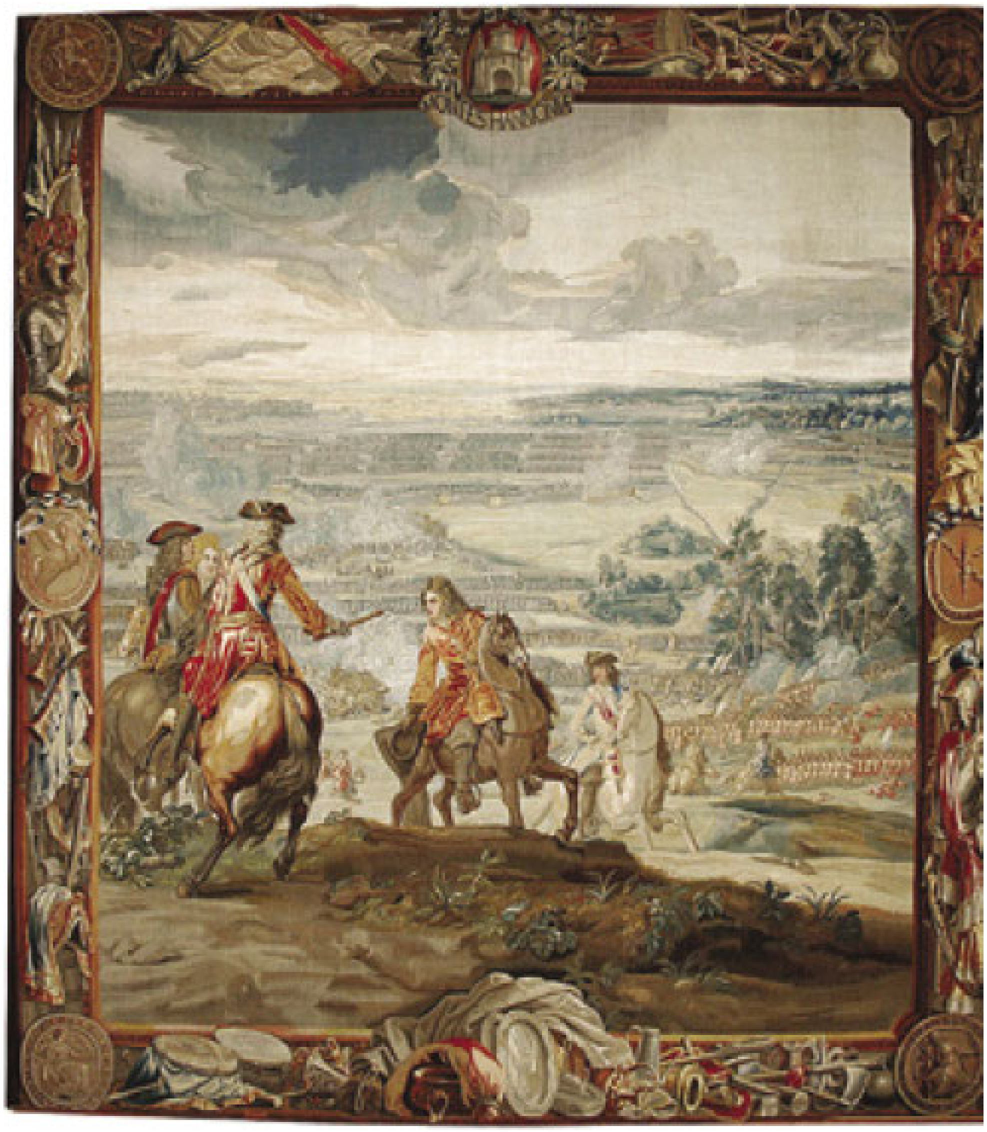
The Byerley Turk; oil on canvas by Frank Markham Skipworth, early 20th century.

Throughout the campaign in Ireland, the regiment was constantly noticed by King William and in 1692 was honoured by him with the title of ‘The King’s Carabiniers’. The use of the title ‘Carabiniers’ was an honorific one, conferred in royal recognition of the regiment’s distinguished conduct during the campaign in Ireland; it did not imply that the regiment was armed solely with carbines or that the regiment was the only mounted unit armed with carbines. Similar honorific titles were given for similar reasons in continental European armies, particularly in that of France; the spelling of the word is, of course, French. The title’s use seems to have been intermittent during the first sixty or so years of the regiment possessing it: some documents employed it, some ignored it, but – for the period covered by this chapter – it will avoid confusion if the regiment is referred to as the Carabiniers.

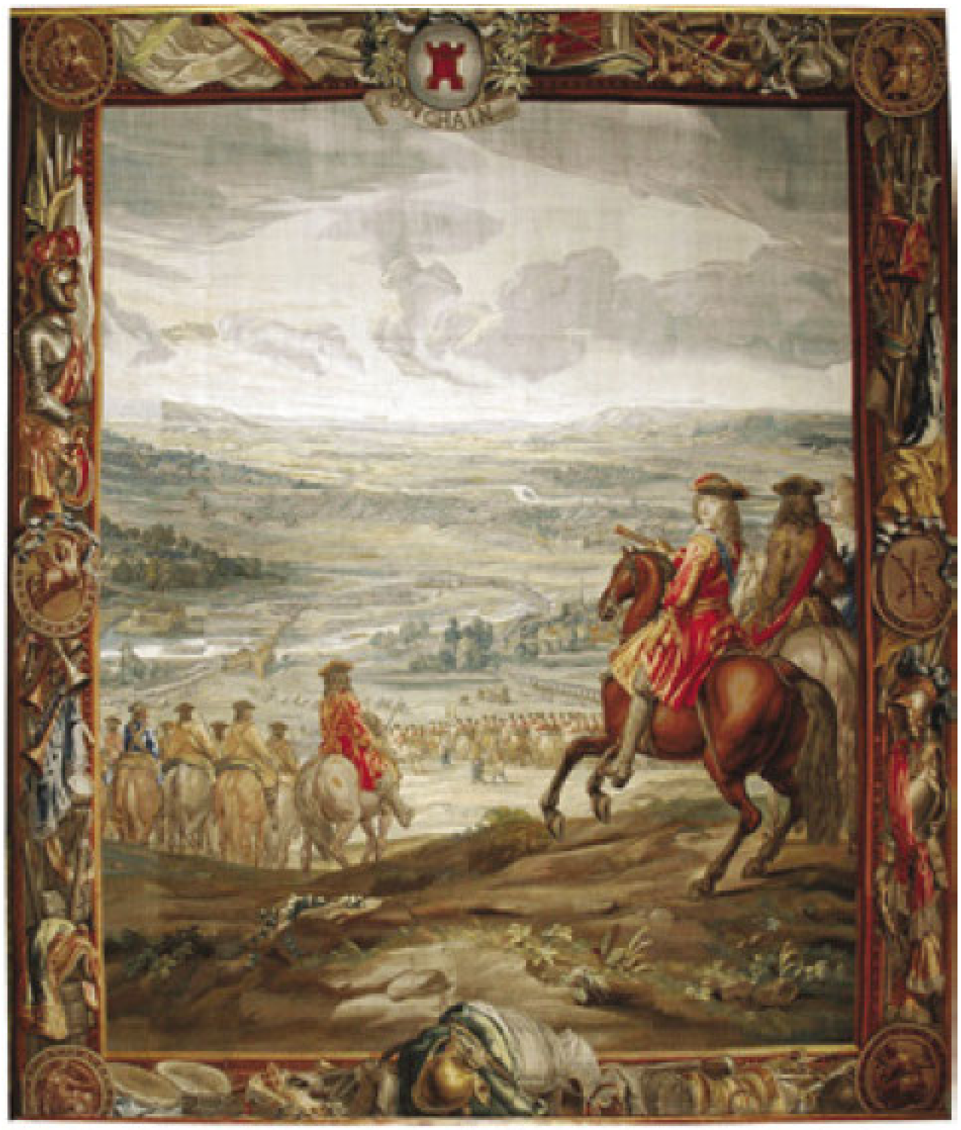


The battle of the Boyne, 1 July 1690; oil on canvas by Jan Wyck, 1690. (National Army Museum, London/Bridgeman Images)

In April 1692 the Carabiniers landed in the Low Countries as part of the force of 50,000 British soldiers with which King William embarked in order to pursue his war against France. Apart from a small amount of involvement at the battle of Steinkirk in August 1692, the Carabiniers saw little action in their first year in Flanders but served with the 4th Horse at the battle of Neerlanden in July 1693. Cornelius Wood (1636–1712), who had been the regiment's Major since April 1690 and had been promoted its Lieutenant-Colonel in January 1692, had so persistently distinguished himself, in Ireland as well as in Flanders, that he was rewarded in December 1693 with the colonelcy of the 4th Horse; this was the first of many personal links that were to bind the two regiments together. Wood was promoted brigadier-general in 1702 and major general in January 1704 before being wounded at the Schellenberg later that year; promoted lieutenant-general in January 1707, he served on Marlborough’s staff at Malplaquet in 1709. In 1712, having enjoyed his regimental colonelcy for nearly twenty years, Wood died as a result of injuries sustained in a fall from his horse two years earlier. In 1694, while in Flanders, the Carabiniers were again promoted in the order of precedence of the regiments of horse, becoming the 7th Horse; they still retained the title ‘King’s Carabiniers’. The Carabiniers fought alongside the 4th Horse for much of the campaign and, indeed, constituted the only cavalry in King William’s army in Brabant during 1696. At the Peace of Ryswick in 1697 the Carabiniers returned home to an instant reduction in size, considerable arrears of pay and five years of domestic postings and duties.



The battle of Malplaquet, 11 September 1709; tapestry woven by Josse de Vos after Lambert de Hondt, c. 1712–17. (Reproduced with the kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Marlborough, Blenheim Palace Image Library)



The siege of Bouchain, 9 August to 12 September 1711; tapestry woven by Josse de Vos after Lambert de Hondt, c. 1712–17. (Reproduced with the kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Marlborough, Blenheim Palace Image Library)

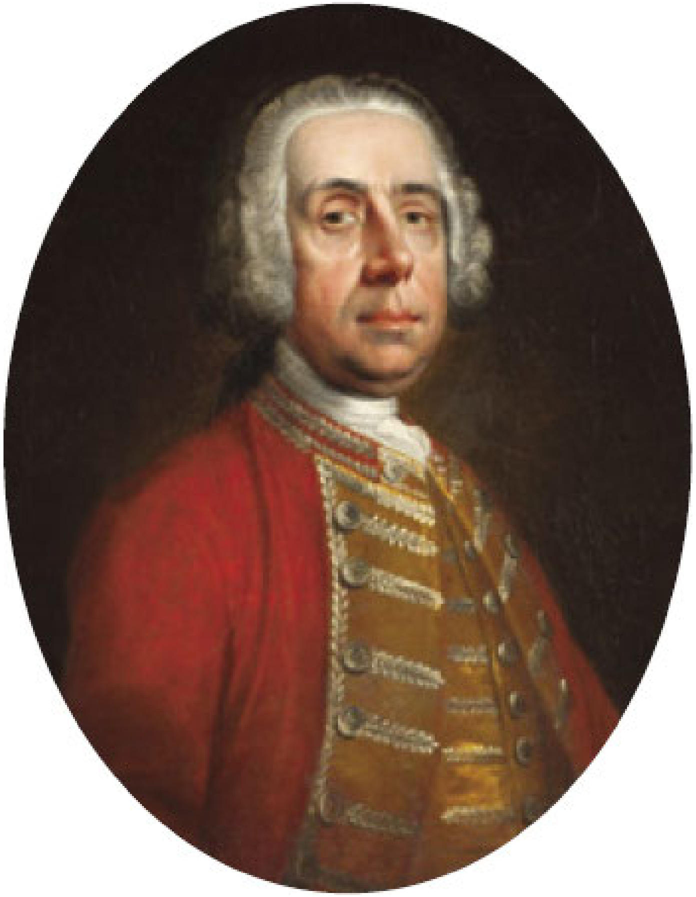
The regiment returned to Brabant in March 1702 and, like the 4th Horse, spent some time defending the Low Countries against French aggression before participating in Marlborough's march to Ulm on the Danube. The Carabiniers were with both the 4th Horse and the Scots Greys at the assault on the Schellenberg and were in the thick of fighting at Blenheim, at which battle the regiment lost five officers and eighty-six horses. Amongst the dead at Blenheim was the regiment's Major, Philip Chenevix, the son of a French Huguenot refugee who had left France in 1685 when, following Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes, most Huguenots – French Protestants – chose to leave that country. After Chenevix's death, his widow and three children received a bounty of £162 (about £12,650 in the early 21st century); one of his sons, also Philip, served in the regiment from 1711 until 1757, exercising executive command as its Lieutenant-Colonel for the last twelve years of his service.

In 1705 and 1706 the Carabiniers added to the number of their battle trophies, capturing the standard of the Bavarian Horse Guards in an affray in Flanders in 1705 and that of the French Royal Regiment of Bombardiers, together with several pieces of ordnance, at the battle of Ramillies the following year. In line with the usual practice of the time, it is probable that those captured standards were sent to the Royal Hospital in Chelsea where the passage of years, and atmospheric pollution, eventually destroyed them. Much of the remainder of the campaign, until the end of the war, was passed in the same theatre of war as that of the 4th Horse, the Carabiniers acquiring cuirasses in 1707. The regiment fought at Oudenarde in 1708 and at Malplaquet in 1709, as did the 4th Horse, and was surprised and nearly overrun during a night attack by the French on its camp at Arleux in 1711; recovering from this, the regiment was present at the capture of Bouchain later that year, which effectively ended the war.

Following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 the regiment returned to garrison duties in Ireland, being placed in momentary states of readiness during the 1715 and 1719 Jacobite rebellions but seeing no action.

Other than the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740–48, which included such famous battles as Dettingen in 1743 and Fontenoy in 1745, the period between 1713 and 1756 was one of relative peace as far as the majority of the British army was concerned. The Carabiniers remained unaffected by the 1745 Jacobite rebellion and were stationed in Ireland until 1760, a total of forty-seven years. Such records as exist of the regiment's history deal fleetingly with this period and so one must assume that Ireland was relatively quiet and that the regiment was dispersed by troops in garrison-towns in the four midland and south-eastern military districts in Ireland, with the individual troops probably changing quarters annually and the regiment spending little time united. The regiment would have been reduced to cadre strength while on the Irish military establishment and it is probable that the total regimental strength in this period did not exceed 200 of all ranks. The regiment provided about sixty men and horses in 1743 and 1744 to augment the army on the continent of Europe that had suffered losses during the War of the Austrian Succession.

In 1746, as a result of the change in designation of the four regiments of horse on the British military establishment to become dragoon guards, the Carabiniers were advanced up the cavalry order of precedence in that year to take its new place as the ‘3rd Regiment of (Irish) Horse, or Carabineers’. The word ‘Carabiniers’ was spelled ‘Carabineers’ in official publications from 1746 until 1788. The ‘Irish’ part of the title reflected the fact that, as with the three other regiments of ‘Irish’ horse, the Carabiniers were part of the Irish military establishment. Because the regiments of the British army that were stationed in Ireland, often for very long periods in the 18th century, were paid for by the Irish government, their costs did not fall upon the British exchequer and so were of no concern to the Parliament in Westminster. This ‘economic invisibility’, together with the regiments’ reduction to cadre strength while in Ireland, meant that the regiments stationed in Ireland tended to escape any cost-cutting measures meted out to regiments on the more visible and more expensive British military establishment. This is why, for some four decades, the hitherto junior – but ‘Irish’ – regiments of horse took precedence over the former senior regiments of horse, such as the 4th Horse, which had been converted to the 3rd Dragoon Guards in 1746. The ‘Irish’ part of the regiment’s title seems to have been little used and had certainly been dropped by 1755.



Lieutenant-Colonel Philip Chenevix (1698–1758); oil on canvas, artist unknown, 1747–57. Appointed cornet in the Carabiniers in 1711, Chenevix retired as a lieutenant-colonel in 1757, having commanded the regiment 1745–57.

The Carabiniers arrived in Germany in 1760, bringing the British army’s cavalry strength there up to thirteen regiments, and although the regiment missed action at the battle of Corpach it was heavily involved at Warburg in July 1760, receiving the battle honour for the latter in 1909. The Carabiniers wintered in Paderborn and spent much of 1761 campaigning in that part of Germany, manoeuvring and skirmishing with the French army. Few actions of any consequence were fought and the majority of British casualties were caused by disease or desertion. Fighting in the war had largely ceased by 1762 and the Carabiniers left Germany for Ireland in the following year, being immediately reduced, on the Irish military establishment, to a cadre strength of barely 150 men.

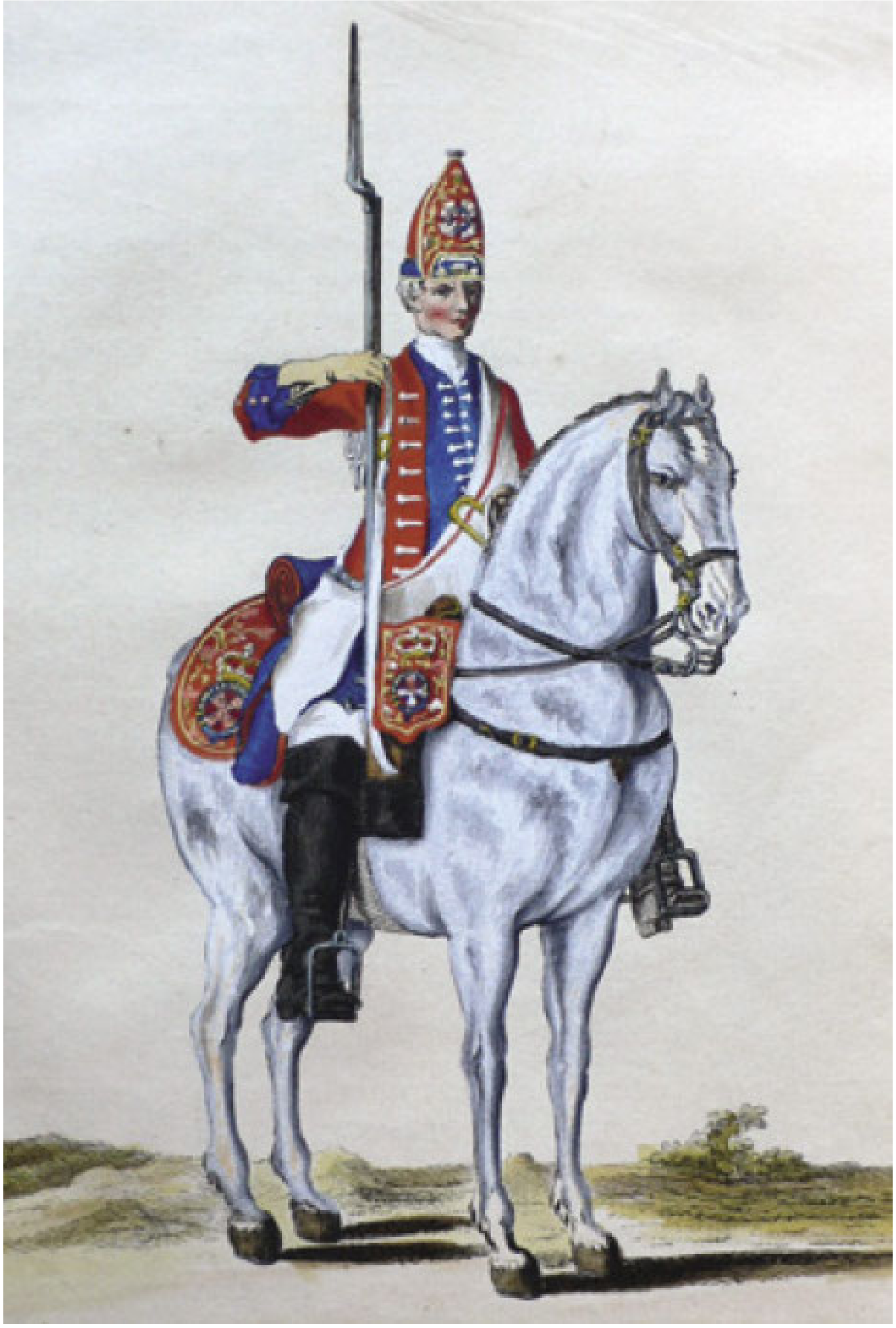
Few items of uniform survive from the 17th and 18th centuries, and, until 1742, little documentary evidence is available. The troops of Scots dragoons raised in 1678 and 1681 wore stone-grey coats. They also wore bonnets, which were presumably blue, but no details are available. Red coats were probably adopted when the regiment moved to England in 1685. The new coats were faced with blue (facings being the cuffs, collars and lapels of the coat, often of a contrasting colour) as befitted a royal regiment. The coats were knee-length and single-breasted, with large numbers of buttons, originally tin but later of brass. Blue breeches were worn with knee-boots. The bayonet and sword were attached to a leather waist-belt, and ammunition or grenades carried in a bag slung from the left shoulder. Cloaks were of red cloth for both horse and dragoons.

The 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards, raised in 1685 as the Earl of Plymouth's and The Queen Dowager's Regiment of Horse respectively, wore coats similar to those of dragoons, but in crimson cloth. Both had green facings. Their hats were wide-brimmed and those of officers decorated with feathers. Steel lobster-tailed helmets and cuirasses were also worn until 1689. The sword was carried in a baldric (a belt worn over the right shoulder), while the troopers' carbine-belt went over the left shoulder. Officers of both horse and dragoons also wore a voluminous crimson silk sash around the waist.

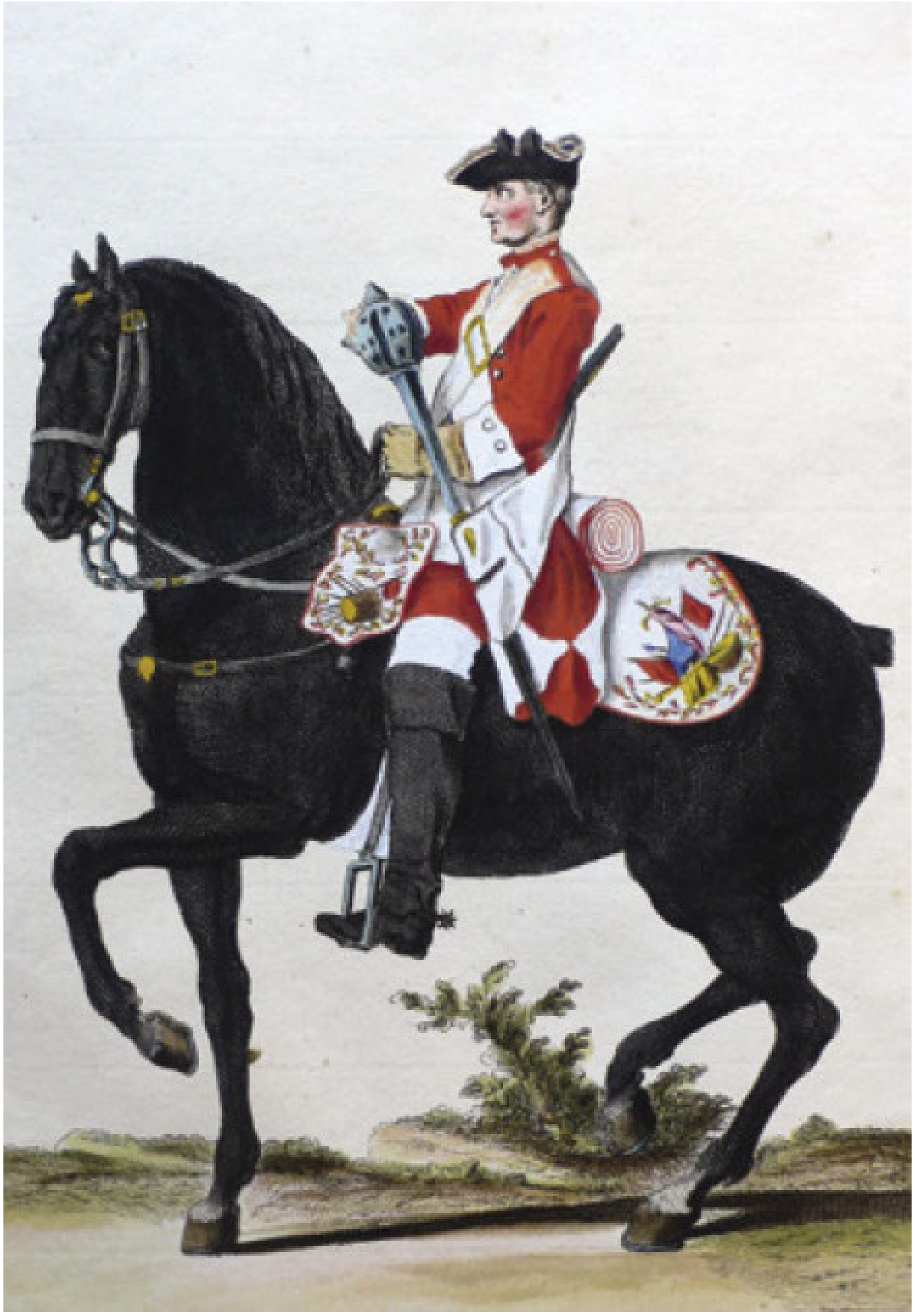
By the early 18th century, hats were turned up on three sides, to form the lace-edged tricorne, the standard military headdress for almost a

hundred years. The Royal Regiment of North British Dragoons, as the Greys’ title became in 1707, had a grenadier troop whose personnel, alone in the regiment at that time, wore the mitre cap. By 1710, red coats had replaced crimson ones for the horse regiments. These coats, with ornamental lace or braid loops to the buttonholes, were fastened at the neck but open below over a long-skirted waistcoat, which, like the breeches, was normally of the facing colour. Around 1715, facing colours changed for both the 4th Horse and the Carabiniers, becoming white and yellow respectively. In the 1720s, officers’ sashes began to be worn over the left shoulder rather than round the waist.

By the 1730s, the coats of the horse regiments were buttoned back to form full-length lapels of the facing colour. The Greys’ coats originally had buttons on both sides, but from 1753 they wore lace or braid loops on both sides but buttons only on the right-hand side. By this date most dragoon regiments wore sleeves with a deep slit or slash at the cuff, fastened by a vertical row of buttons. The buttonholes were decorated with chevron-shaped loops, a style that lasted for more than a century.



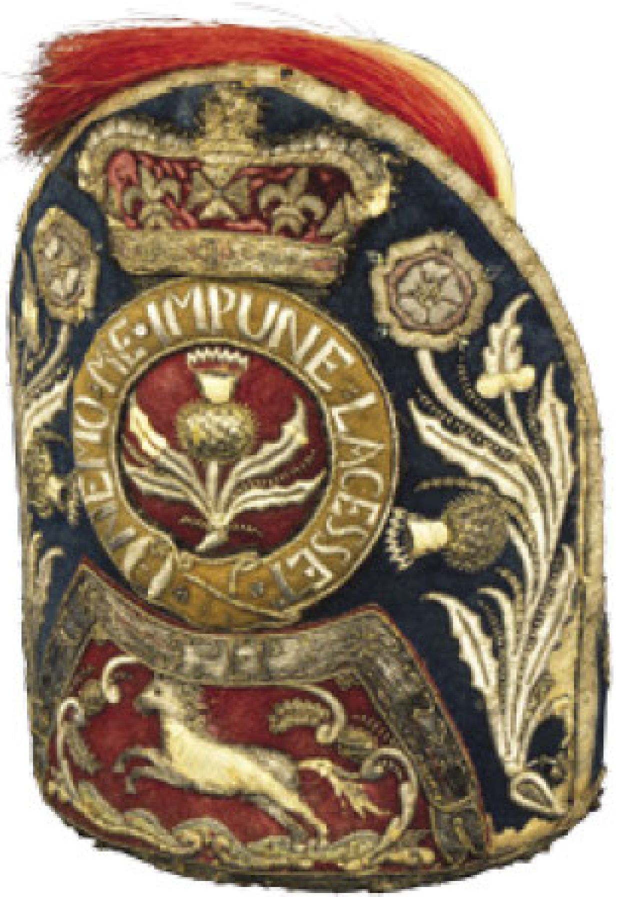
Private, Royal Regiment of North British Dragoons, c. 1742. (Prince Consort’s Library, Aldershot; photo: A. E. Cormack)



Private, 4th Horse (later 3rd Dragoon Guards), c. 1742. The King's Carabiniers' uniform was exactly the same but with yellow facings. (Prince Consort's Library, Aldershot; photo: A. E. Cormack)

The first pictorial record of the army’s dress, the Representation of the Cloathing of His Majesty’s Household, and of all the Forces upon the Establishments of Great Britain and Ireland (the ‘Cloathing Book’, to give it its abbreviated title), was published in 1742. In it, the Greys’ soldier is depicted in a mitre cap, all members of the regiment having been authorised by this date to wear that headdress instead of the tricorne. Lace was white for the horse regiments and yellow for the Greys. Unfortunately these images provide no information on the uniform of officers, which often differed significantly from that of the men.

In 1746, when three regiments of horse were converted to dragoons, the 4th Horse became the 3rd Dragoon Guards. Their coats now had lapels only to the waist, and had cuffs and sleeves of dragoon style. The lace changed from silver or white to gold or yellow, and white breeches were worn. The sword was slung from a waist-belt, as shown in the set of paintings by the Swiss artist David Morier in 1751, now in the Royal Collection. Like the ‘Cloathing Book’, the Morier paintings depict only private soldiers. In the same year, however, a Clothing Warrant was issued, which directed that officers’ coats were to be made to the same patterns as those of the men, but with gold or silver lace edging to buttonholes. Contemporary portraits indicate that this instruction continued frequently to be disregarded.



Light troop mitre cap, 2nd Dragoons, c. 1760. (© National Museums Scotland)

From 1756 both the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the 2nd Dragoons had a light troop, whose uniform was generally as for the other troops but included lighter boots and a special cap. For the 3rd Dragoon Guards, this was a leather 'jockey cap' with a turned-up red front and a metal crest. The light troop of the Greys wore a leather skullcap fitted with a lower version of the standard mitre cap front. The light troops were disbanded in 1764.

Charles Webb

THE DRAGOONS

Late-17th-century Scotland was a troubled place; more troubled, it may be said, than her neighbour to the south. The Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 had been followed by attempts, of gradually increasing severity, to impose upon Scotland a form of church government not markedly dissimilar to that in use in the Church of England: Episcopacy. Many Presbyterians in Scotland saw this as yet another attempt to subject them to increasing control from both England and the Anglophile and Episcopalian government of Scotland and they resisted it accordingly. The resultant growth of Presbyterian-inspired civil disobedience was such in some parts of Scotland, especially in the south-west, that the Scottish government saw no alternative to a policy of active repression of the militant Presbyterians known as Covenanters – whose roots went back to the 16th century. Religious disobedience was equated with nascent treason and treated accordingly. Differences in religion were used at that period not only to mask more deep-seated political ambitions on the part of the leaders of the opposing factions but also as a means of explaining and justifying the conflict to the less sophisticated of those led, many of whom fought and died in the name of their religious beliefs without understanding, or indeed knowing much about, the more complicated political aspects of the conflict.

Another factor permeating the period which may seem unthinkable – at least by the usual standards of law enforcement in Britain nowadays – was the acceptability of the use of military force to suppress civilian disturbances. Such use of soldiers continued in Britain until well after the establishment of permanent police forces in the mid-19th century but the ideal soldier-policeman for European governments of the 17th century was the dragoon. King Louis XIV of France had employed the dragonnade – brutal measures to enforce his religious laws – after his revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 had removed the right to freedom of worship from his Protestant Huguenot subjects; the measures taken by the Scottish government of King

Charles II in the Scotland of the 1660s and 1670s closely resembled the harrying, repressive policies of the French king. Armed, organised and equipped like infantrymen, dragoons were mounted and so could travel much faster across country, especially rocky or boggy country, than could ordinary foot soldiers. Companies or regiments of dragoons were also cheaper to raise and maintain than troops or regiments of horse since their rate of pay was lower and their horses were smaller – of inferior quality to cavalry horses – and thus cheaper to buy, replace and feed.

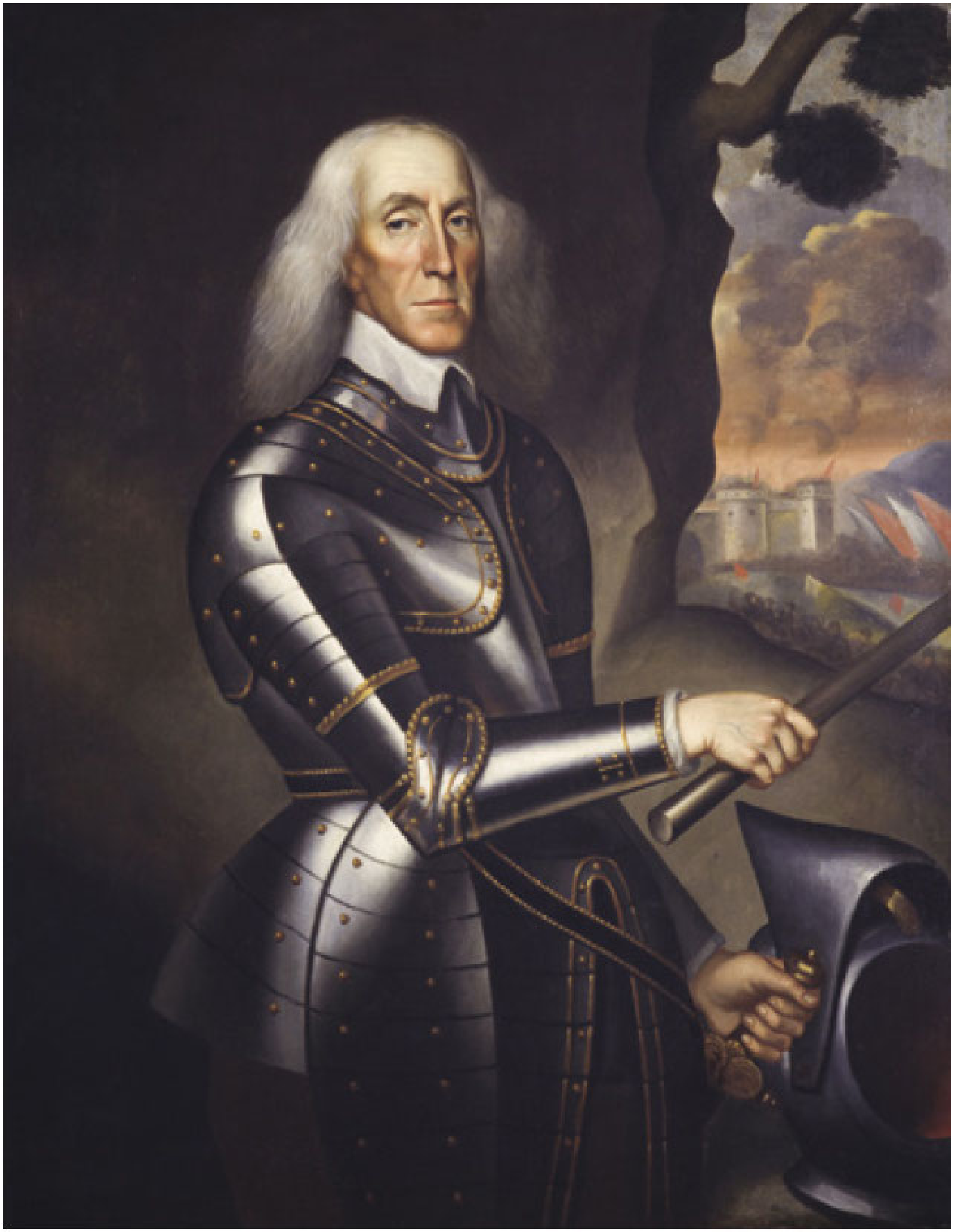
The derivation of the term ‘dragoon’ has long been a matter of controversy but it seems likely that it was associated with the name of a type of heavy carbine of the early 17th century known to contemporaries as a ‘dragon’. It is also, of course, quite possible that the ‘dragon’ took its name from its users but that must remain a puzzle for etymologists. Whatever was the case, 17th-century British dragoons were also frequently armed with muskets, carbines or ‘musketoons’ – firearms that were essentially short muskets and thus so similar to contemporary descriptions of a ‘dragon’ that they were probably the same thing. Whereas the ‘dragon’, or ‘musketoon’, seems to have had a bore similar to that of an infantryman’s musket (about 12 bore in the 1620s), the true carbine was actually a short musket with a much smaller bore (about 24 bore in the 1630s).

By the 1670s, the Covenanters seemed to be thriving on the Scottish government’s ineffectual attempts to persecute them; they regularly attended conventicles – open-air prayer meetings with sentries posted to warn of approaching soldiers – and showed no sign of being coerced. Attempts to stamp out religious dissent appeared to be in need of assistance, so three companies of dragoons were raised in Scotland during 1678: it is believed that the men of these companies of dragoons wore grey coats and bonnets. Dragoons, being essentially infantry with horses, were organised by company and not by troop and, unlike regiments of horse and because of their original semi-infantry role, had sergeants as well as corporals. The increase in the government forces in Scotland had quite the opposite effect to driving the Covenanters underground: the authorities in Scotland rapidly found themselves faced with a full-scale rebellion. In 1679, battles resulted between the government’s forces and those of the rebels – at Drumclog and at Bothwell Bridge. At the former battle, a small government force under John Graham of Claverhouse – who, as Viscount Dundee, would be killed ten years later at the battle of Killiecrankie – was routed but at the latter battle the tables were turned and the Covenanters bloodily defeated. The three Scottish companies of dragoons were involved at Bothwell Bridge, where the government forces were commanded by James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, and also in the following year at Airds Moss.

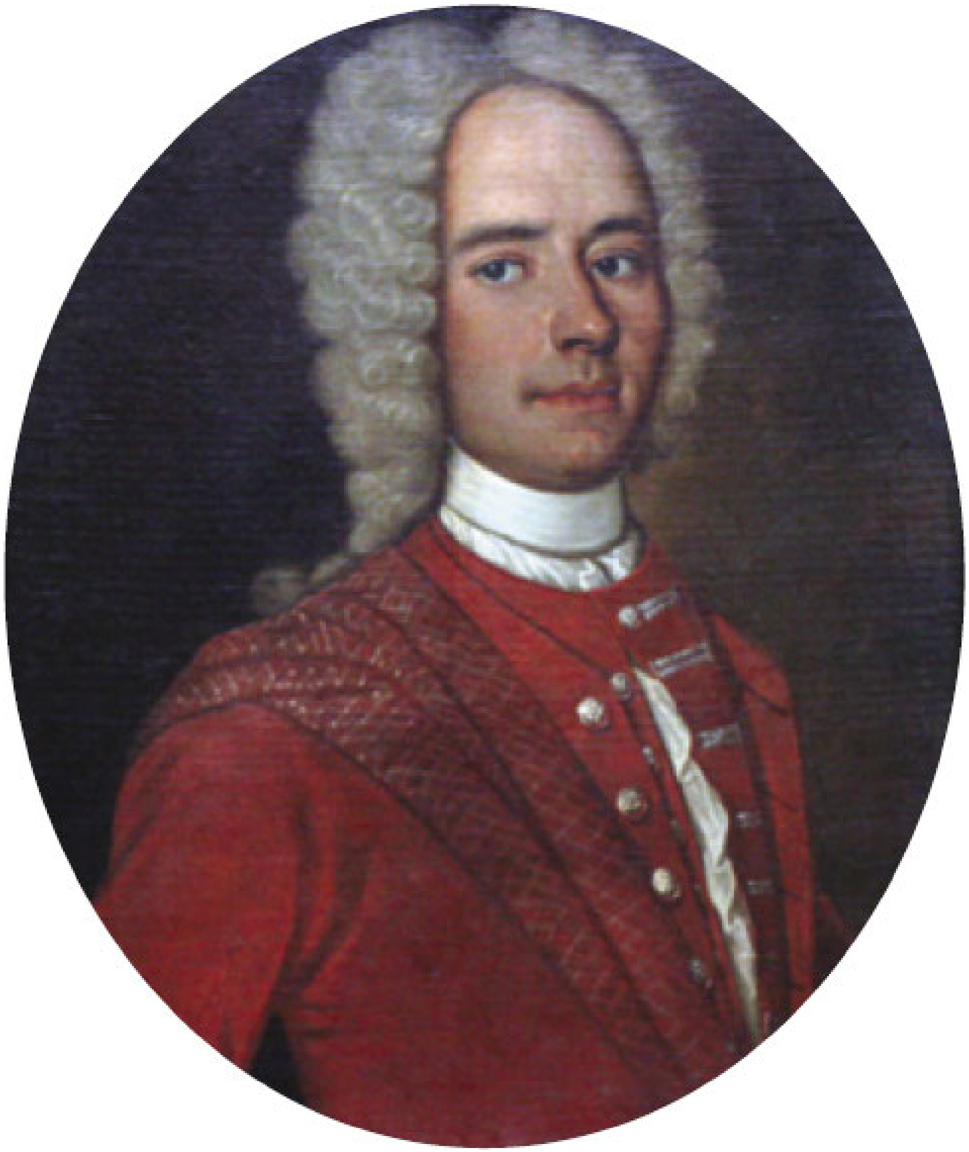
In 1681, so successful had the counter-insurgency campaign been, a further three companies of dragoons were raised, each of fifty men, and the six companies were formed into a regiment of dragoons under the colonelcy of Lieutenant-General Thomas Dalzell, or Dalyell (1615–85). It is said that in 1683 Dalzell was given leave to import stone-grey cloth from England to clothe his regiment and that in 1684 this permission was repeated, despite the other regiments in Scotland being required to be dressed in the national colour of red. It may be that this special permission to wear grey lapsed with Dalzell's death since it is recorded that in 1687 the privates of the regiment were dressed in red cloth coats with blue serge linings.

Dalzell was a remarkable man by any standards. A soldier all his adult life, he is believed to have first seen action in the La Rochelle expedition of 1628, when he would have been thirteen years old. In the 1640s he was in Ireland, earning himself a reputation for exemplary ferocity, against his own deserters as much as against the Irish. Captured whilst fighting for King Charles II at the battle of Worcester in 1650, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London but escaped to join his king in France and then returned to Scotland to oppose the parliamentarian forces in the campaign of 1654. Returning to France briefly, he then travelled to Russia and fought for the Tsar, Alexei I, for ten years until, as a Russian general, he was summoned home by King Charles II in 1665. He was Commander-in-Chief in Scotland in 1666 and 1667 and again from 1679 until his death in 1685. An uncompromising disciplinarian with a hatred of Covenanting Presbyterians amounting almost to mania, he drafted the Articles of War for the Forces in Scotland in 1667: of the eighty-six articles, forty-two specified the death penalty for offences and several others offered a sentence of mutilation.

Dalzell's regiment of dragoons was involved in the suppression of the Earl of Argyll's rebellion in 1685, which followed the death of King Charles II and accession of King James II and VII. Following the suppression of the rebellion, the regiment is said to have marched into England in June 1685 and may have remained south of the border until 1688, in which year it was summoned to his support by King James as part of the Scottish forces, on whose loyalty he hoped he could still rely, as invasion by Prince William of Orange threatened. At the Revolution of 1688 the regiment's loyalty was severely tested and clearly divided and while the colonel changed – as was normal throughout the army – several officers remained loyal to the old regime once the regiment returned to Scotland in 1689. Although the regiment avoided involvement in the battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, it was part of the force that pursued the Jacobites both before and after that action and it actively participated in the final rout of the Jacobites at Cromdale on Speyside in 1690.



Lieutenant-General Thomas Dalyell of Binns (1615–85), first Colonel of the Scots Greys, 1681–85 (detail); oil on canvas by L. Schuneman, c. 1670. (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



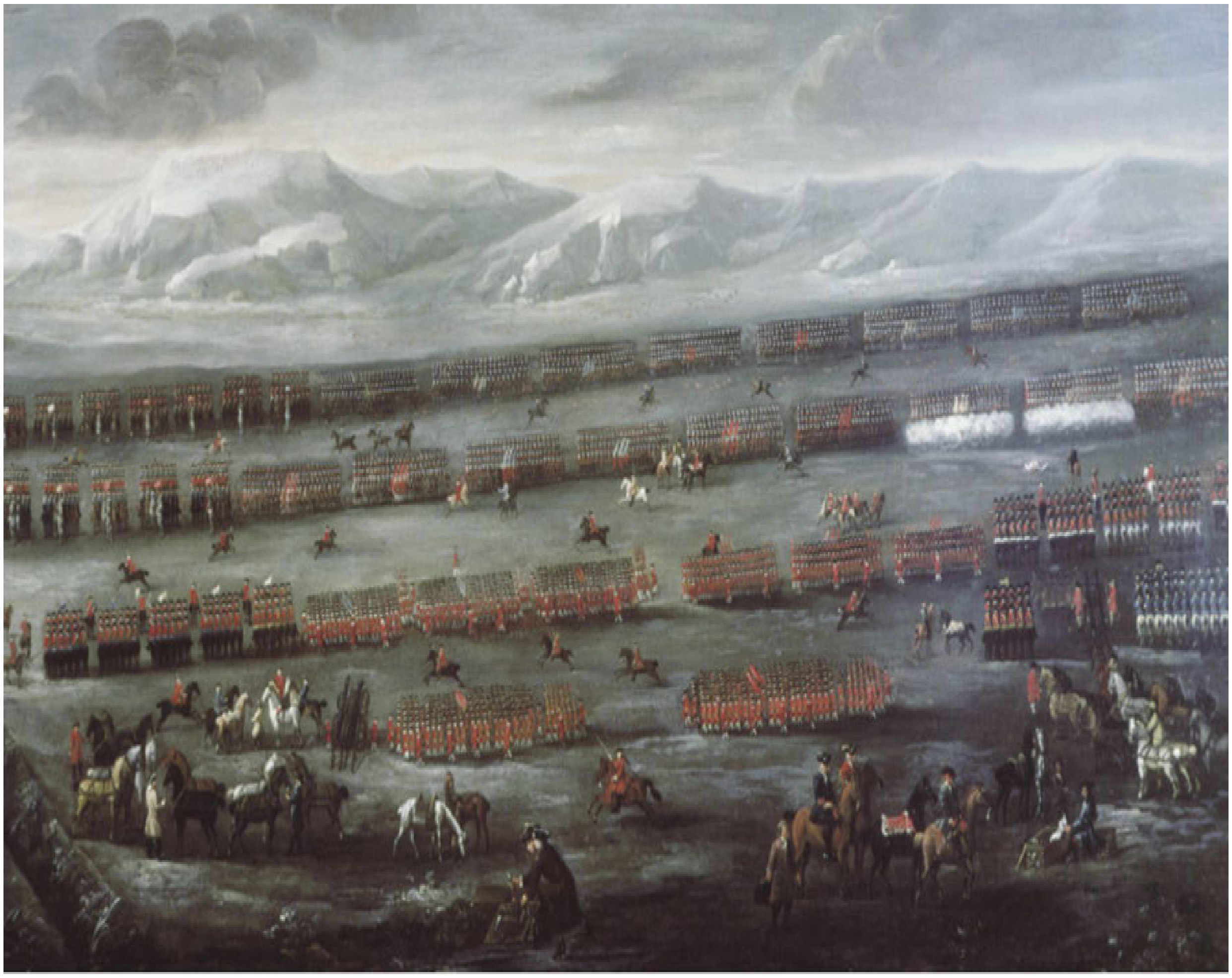
An officer traditionally identified as Andrew Agnew, younger of Lochnaw (1687/89–1771), who served in 2nd Dragoons 1705–09 before becoming an infantry officer and dying a lieutenant-general; it is thought more probably to represent Andrew Agnew of Lochryan (or Croach) (c. 1670–1731), who served in the regiment 1689–1706, or

another member of the Agnew family. Oil on canvas, artist unknown, probably 20th century.

The regiment's title as the 'Royal Regiment of Scots Dragoons' was confirmed by King William III in May 1692. In April 1694, in a report of a review in Hyde Park in London, the regiment was recorded not only as being mounted on the grey horses that would eventually provide its world-famous name but also as being, with its smart and well-found appearance, more like a regiment of horse than one of dragoons. It has been suggested that the grey horses for so long associated with the regiment and on which the regiment was clearly mounted by 1694, were originally acquired by Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Livingstone, Bt., 1st Viscount Teviot, in about 1693 and that their source was the stables of King William's Dutch Life Guards, a regiment said to have been mounted on greys and to have returned to the United Provinces of the Netherlands in about 1693. Lord Teviot (c. 1651–1711) had served in the army of the United Provinces in the 1670s and 1680s, accompanying Prince William of Orange to England and being made Colonel of the Regiment in 1688; he was close to the king and to the court, so the suggestion is a plausible one. As horses of the Dutch Life Guards, the greys acquired by Lord Teviot would have been of a size and stature normally expected of the mounts of a regiment of horse and it may be that factor that accounted for the comment recorded in April 1694.

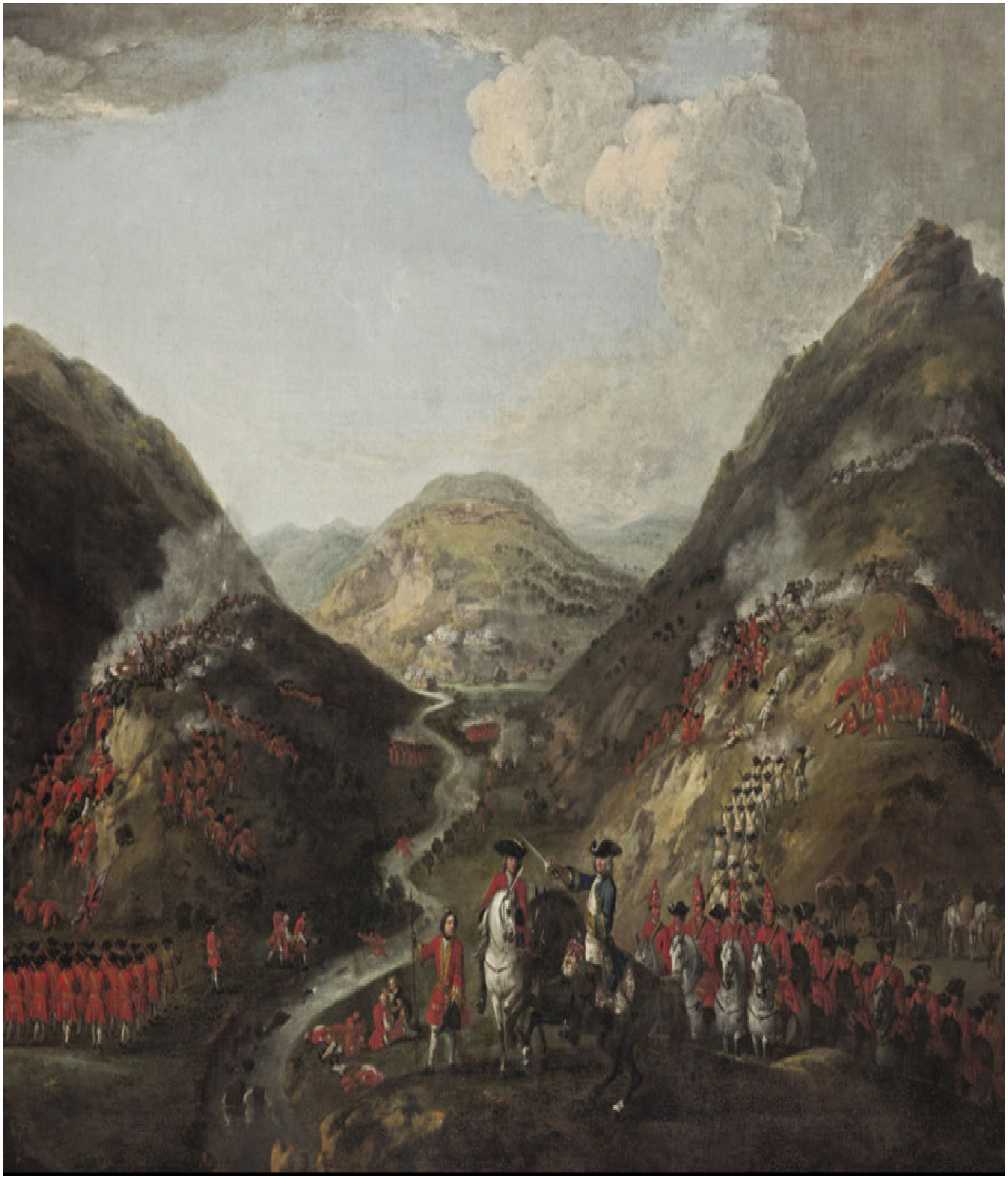
In common with most of the rest of the British army, the regiment embarked for the Low Countries later in 1694 and campaigned there, without seeing much action, until the Peace of Ryswick in 1697. On their return to Britain the regimental strength was almost halved and two companies disbanded. Captain Andrew Agnew of Lochryan, who was commanding a company in the regiment in 1697, received instructions to downgrade his youngest sergeant and corporal, to pay his quartermaster as a sergeant and to tell his adjutant to combine his duties with those of the quartermaster. The Greys spent the years 1698 and 1699 in England, first at Harwich and then at Canterbury, before moving to Scotland in 1700.

On the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1702, the regiment was brought up to strength and left Britain for Brabant, where it spent two years with the rest of the forces in fairly desultory campaigning and besieging of frontier towns before joining Marlborough's march to the Danube in 1704. In July 1704, the regiment took a distinguished – and typically dragoon – role at the assault on the hilltop fortress of the Schellenberg, above Donauwörth in Bavaria: it fought as infantry in the uphill assault, then retrieved its horses and remounted to pursue the fleeing enemy. The regiment's casualties amounted to eight killed and eighteen wounded. At the battle of Blenheim in the following month it sustained no casualties and the regiment, fighting mounted, contributed to the victory by driving fleeing French infantry back into the burning and crowded village of Blenheim, where they had little choice but to surrender. The regimental prize money for the Schellenberg and Blenheim was apportioned according to rank in the manner standard at the period: the colonel received £150, whilst each of the privates was given £1.10s (about £11,700 and £117 respectively in the early 21st century). A contemporary account by an eyewitness of the regiment's role at Blenheim employed the term 'Grey Dragoons' for the first recorded time: this implies that the regiment's unofficial title was in common usage by c. 1704.



The battle of Sheriffmuir, or Dunblane, 13 November 1715; red-coated dragoons on greys may be seen on the extreme right of the Government front line. Oil on canvas by John Wootton, c. 1715. (The Art Archive/Private collection)

Participation as cavalry at the battle of Ramillies followed in 1706. Ramillies is very significant in the history of the regiment. The story goes that the regiment, together with the 5th Dragoons – then known as the Royal Regiment of Irish Dragoons – apparently cut off and captured at least one entire battalion of the French Régiment de Picardie and collaborated in defeating and taking the colours of the French Régiment du Roi; both regiments were among the elite of the French army and their defeat was of great importance in a victory that humiliated the French army for a significant period. Prior to Ramillies, part of the regiment – as with an infantry regiment of the period – was dressed, equipped and trained as grenadiers. After Ramillies and as an honorary distinction, the entire regiment was ordered to dress as grenadiers and so adopted the tall, conical cap which distinguished the grenadier companies among the Foot Guards and infantry of the line. In the infantry since the 1670s, the grenadiers had occupied the right of the line when a regiment was on parade and the grenadier companies, chosen from the largest and strongest of a regiment’s men, were used as assault troops in action, assuming the position of the greatest risk in order to reap the greatest glory. To denote an entire regiment as grenadiers was to pay it an enormous compliment – as happened to the 1st Foot Guards after the battle of Waterloo in 1815. The distinctive headdress of the grenadier, initially worn by the regiment in the form of tall, embroidered, cloth ‘mitre’ caps and then, after c. 1778, as bearskin caps, remains the Full Dress headdress of the regiment today, commemorating its distinguished conduct of more than 300 years ago.

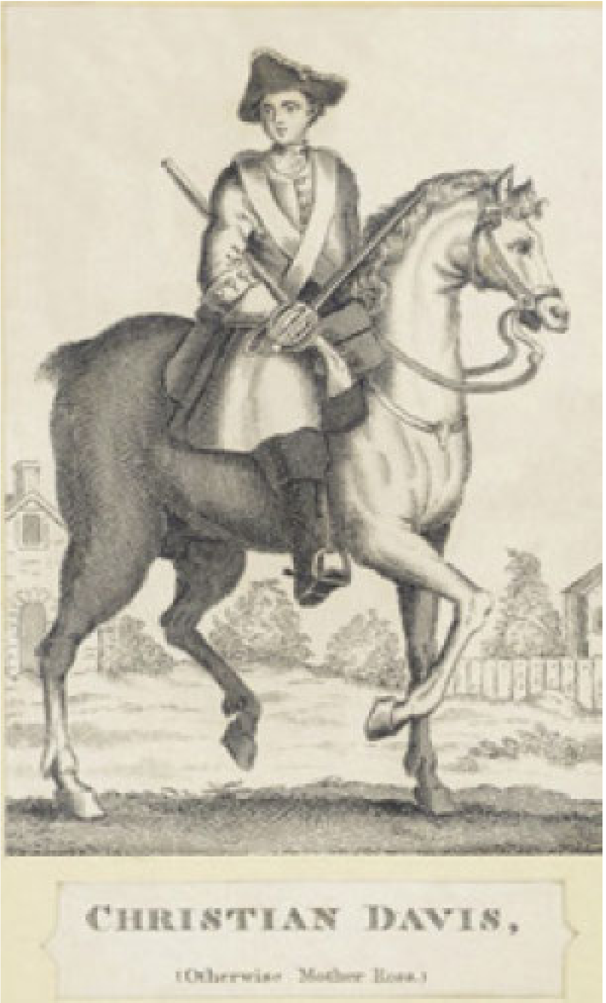


The battle of Glenshiel, 10 June 1719; the head of a column of 2nd Dragoons – wearing mitre caps and on greys – is depicted in the right foreground. Oil on canvas by Pieter Tillemans, 1719. (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

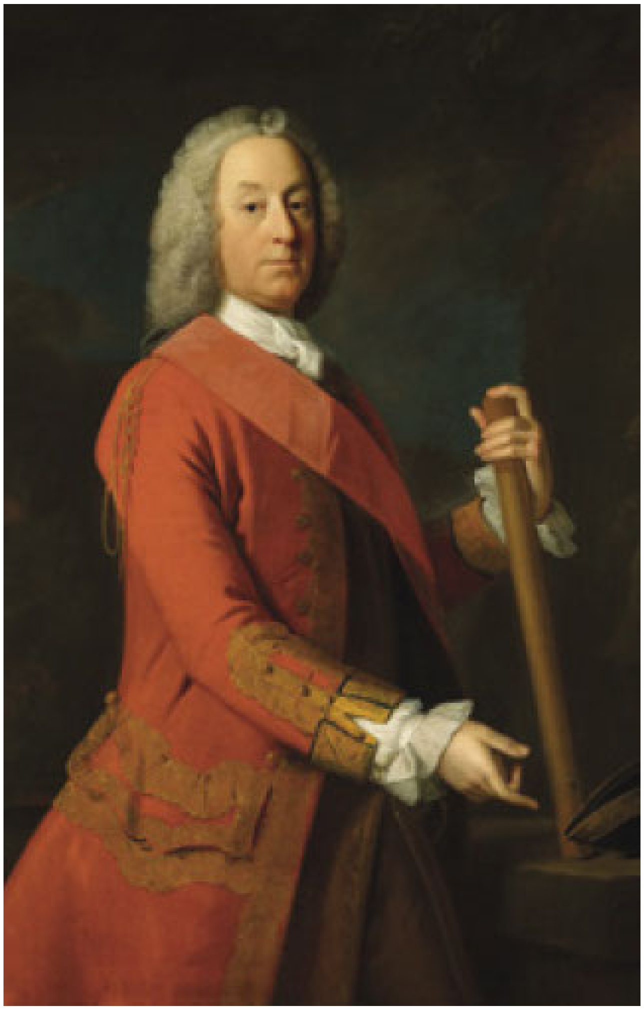
Among the regimental casualties at the battle of Ramillies was Christian Welsh, or Walsh, a female dragoon who is said to have served for four years in the regiment by that time without her gender being either obvious or discovered; it was apparently only revealed when she was wounded at Ramillies. Much of her remarkable life story has been the stuff of legend, in her own time as much as today. A significant amount of the legend is owed to a book first published in 1740 and entitled The Life and Adventures of Mrs Christian Davies, commonly call'd Mother Ross; who, in several campaigns … in the quality of a foot-soldier and dragoon, gave many signal proofs of an unparallell'd courage and personal bravery. Taken from her own mouth when a pensioner of Chelsea Hospital etc…

The story goes that Christian (Kit), née Cavanagh, was born in Dublin in 1667. In 1693, when she was aged twenty-six and with two children, her husband, Richard Welsh or Walsh, left her one day to go drinking with a friend; he clearly overdid it since he awoke, no doubt with a hangover, to find himself on a ship bound for Flanders. Unable to return home, he enlisted in the British army and when, a year later, Christian discovered this, she too enlisted – in an infantry regiment and dressed as a man – in order to find him; she did so but, sadly, he was killed shortly after their reunion, presumed to have been at some point in the mid-1690s. Subsequently taken up by a Captain Ross, who was also killed, she then married a guardsman called Davies and both husband and wife served until the end of the Nine Years War in 1697 without Christian's sex or her liaison with Davies being discovered. Davies re-enlisted at the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession, in 1702, and it was then that Christian re-enlisted, still disguised as a man, in the 2nd Dragoons. After many vicissitudes, including Davies being bought out of the army by Christian and then, when drunk, re-enlisting, both ultimately became pensioners of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Davies was a sergeant in-pensioner at Chelsea but Christian's status there remains uncertain. She was probably first given a 'Queen's Letterman' daily pension of 12 pence, or 1 shilling, at some point before the death of Queen Anne in 1714. In 1717 – in which year the pension records described her as 'a fat, jolly woman rec'd several wounds in ye habit of a man' – that pension was reduced to five pence, the standard rate for a pensioned dragoon; it is apparent, though, that her pension was restored to 12 pence a day in 1720.

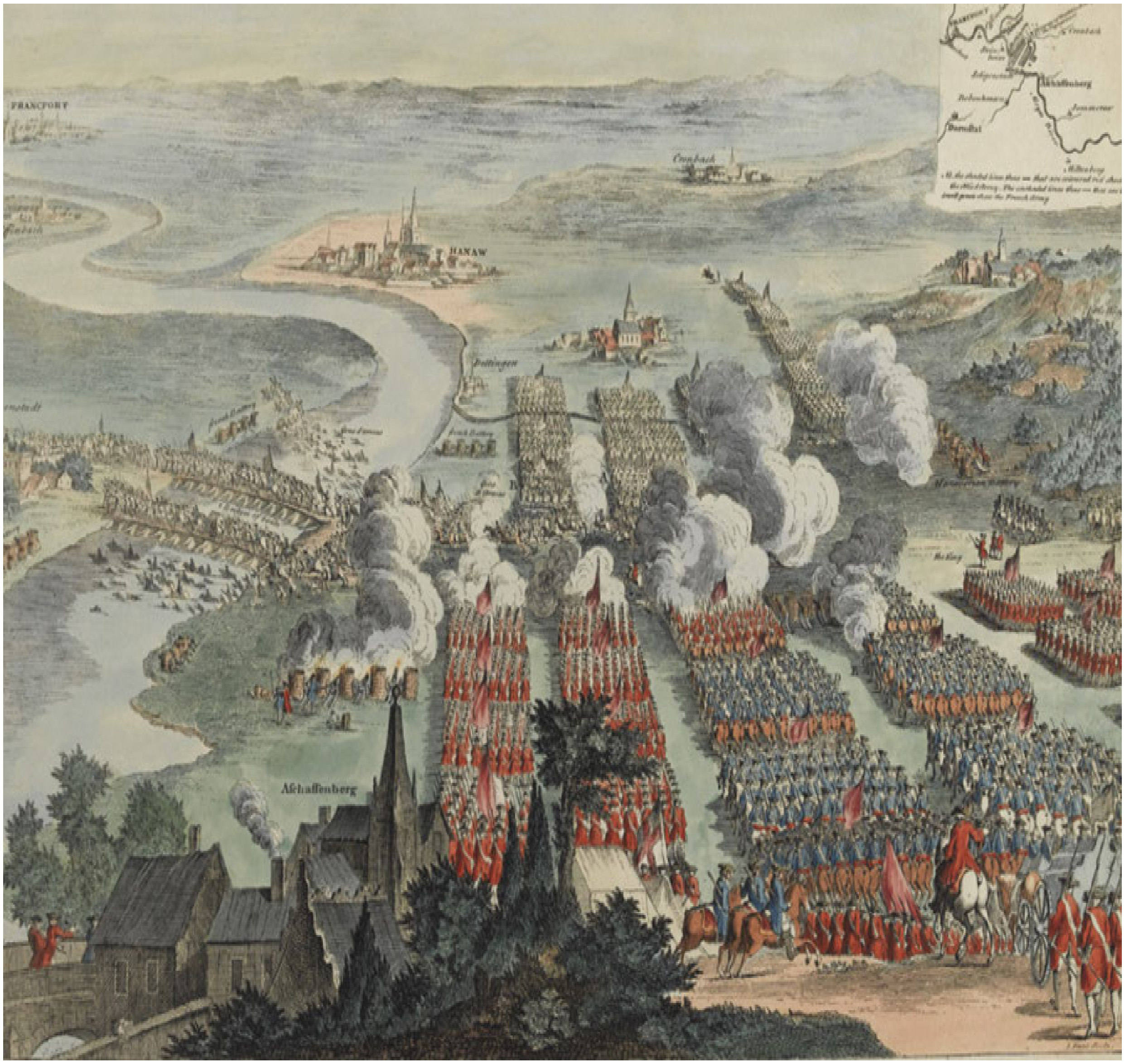
Davies, whose first name remains unknown, stayed with Christian until his death at the Royal Hospital early in July 1739. Christian, who nursed him in his final illness – which she contracted in the process – died four days later, on 7 July 1739, aged seventy-two, and was buried at the Royal Hospital Chelsea.



Christian Davis (Otherwise Mother Ross.); an engraving of Christian Davies, possibly c. 1741–42.



Lieutenant-General The Honourable Sir James Campbell of Lawers KB. Lawers was Colonel of 2nd Dragoons 1717–45. Oil on canvas by Allan Ramsay, 1744. (Courtesy of Sotheby's)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Dettingen
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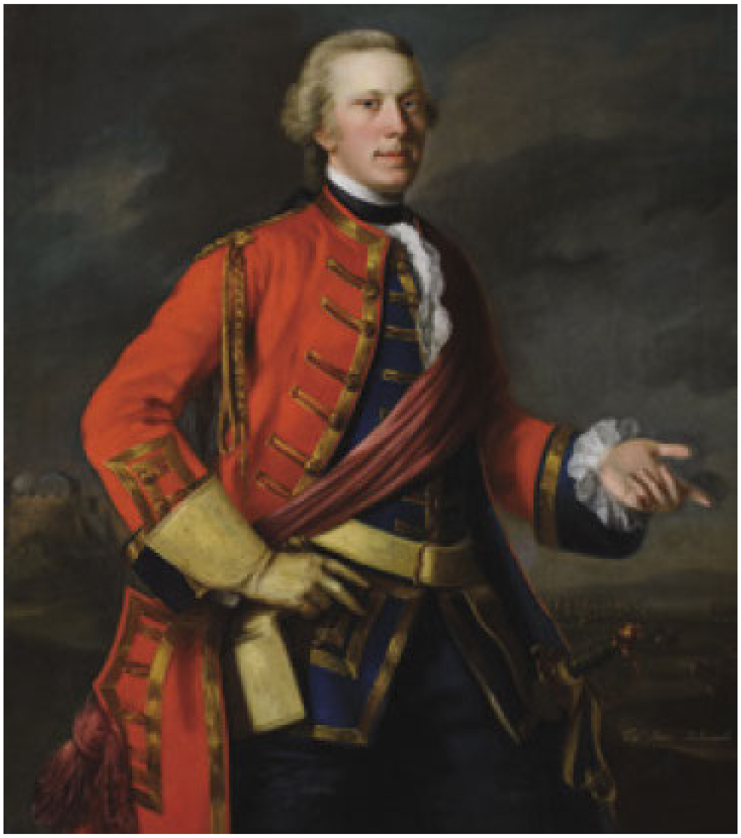
The battle of Dettingen, 27 June 1743; coloured engraving by I. Pano after F. Daremberg, published by Wilkinson, c. 1743. (National Army Museum, London/Bridgeman Images)

The Act of Union of 1707, which united the parliaments of England and Scotland and thereby further reduced the independence of Scotland, resulted in the regiment becoming titled as the ‘Royal Regiment of North British Dragoons’. The regiment fought at Oudenarde in 1708 and at Malplaquet in

1709; at both battles the regiment was led into action by its Lieutenant-Colonel, The Honourable James Campbell of Lawers. At Malplaquet, on 11 September 1709, while forming before the action began, the regiment was attacked in strength by the heavy cavalry of the French Maison du Roi, the overwhelming weight of which attack initially drove the Greys back. Rallying under Campbell's determined leadership, the regiment re-formed and undertook a series of determined charges into the French cavalry which resulted in about thirty regimental casualties but also in a check to the French advance that allowed the remainder of the allied cavalry to deploy into its formation for what became a successful, concerted attack on the French army. The remainder of the War of the Spanish Succession saw the regiment fully engaged, under Campbell's command, in the capture of five French frontier fortresses and cities and it seems, from all accounts of its part in the war, that it was increasingly being tactically deployed as cavalry and not as true dragoons. Campbell received a brevet colonelcy in 1710 and was appointed Colonel of the Regiment in 1717.

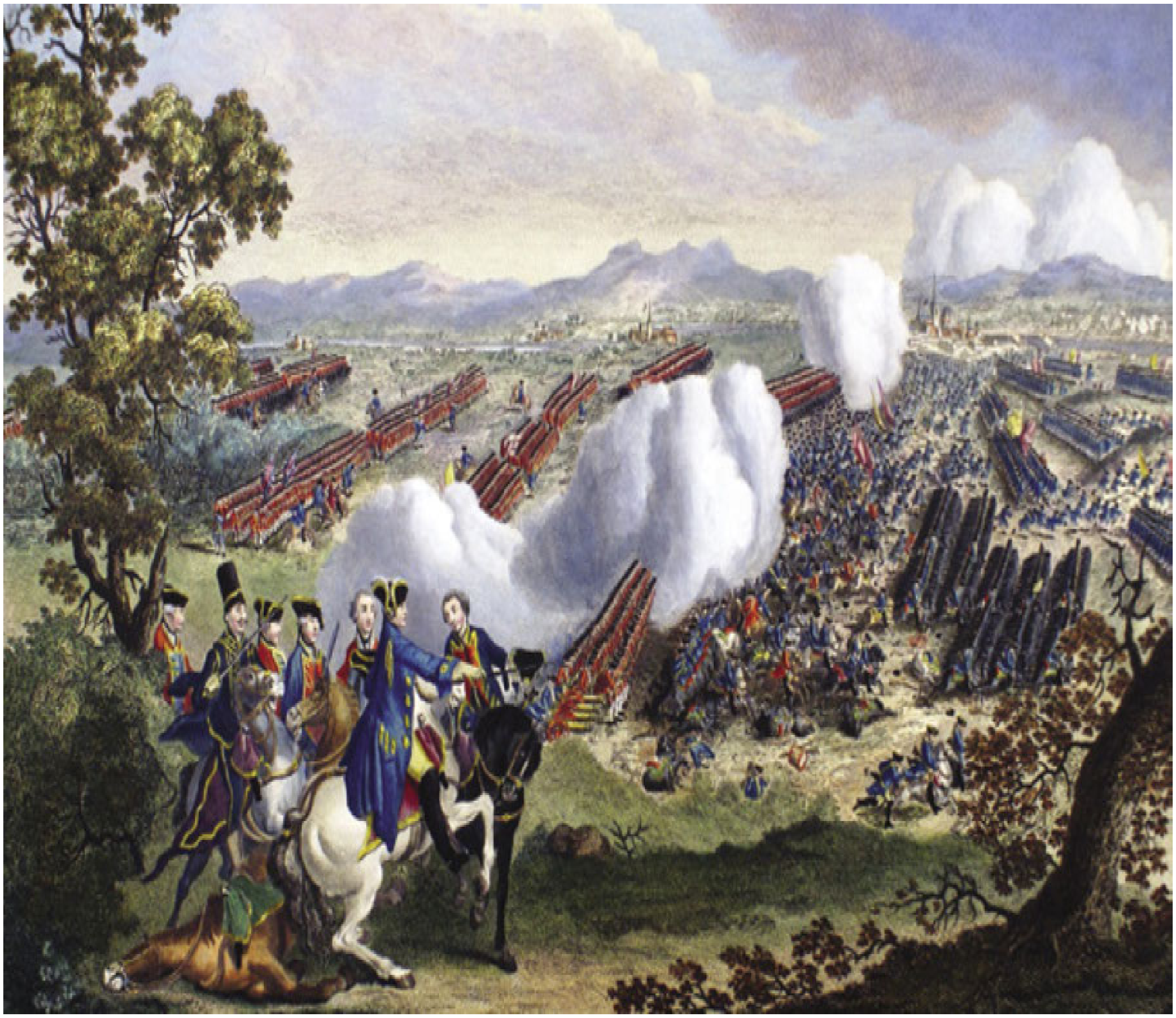
Returning to England in 1713, the regiment was increased in strength to nine companies, although these companies seem, with increasing frequency, to have been called 'troops' in the surviving records; this is further evidence of the diminution of the regiment's role as true dragoons by that time. This augmentation was only temporary though, since in 1715 and upon the outbreak of another Jacobite rebellion in Scotland following the accession of King George I, three troops were taken to be incorporated in the 7th Dragoons, reducing the regiment again to six troops. The regiment moved to Scotland in 1715 and camped at Stirling to await developments; in October it skirmished with a party of Jacobite soldiers in Dunfermline. The regiment spent some weeks in the Lowlands, marching through Kinross, capturing a ship off Burntisland and breaking a few heads in Leith while the large forces of both sides attempted to come to grips with each other. In November, on the rolling moor north-east of Dunblane known as Sheriffmuir, the two armies met; the regiment was deployed on the right flank of the government forces and defeated and pursued the opposing Jacobite cavalry for some miles.

For the next six years, until 1721, the regiment was part of a type of mobile garrison in Scotland that was intended to thwart any further attempts at Jacobite-inspired, and Spanish-funded, insurrections. Three troops of the regiment, comprising about 120 officers and men, formed the only mounted component of a small government force engaged at the battle of Glenshiel in 1719 against a force of 320 Spaniards and about 600 Highlanders; it was at Glenshiel that the regiment last fought as dragoons (suffering no casualties) and at which the Jacobites and their allies were soundly beaten. During the next two decades the regiment was stationed in a variety of locations throughout Britain and fluctuated in establishment from six to nine troops, depending upon the likelihood of foreign adventures. It was in northern England 1722–23, in Scotland 1724–25, in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire 1726–27, in Yorkshire 1728–30, in Scotland 1731–37, in Kent 1738, in Dorset and Wiltshire 1739, in Yorkshire 1740 and in Berkshire 1741–42; in each of the locations, the regiment would have been separated by troops, whose billets would have changed periodically, and only reunited for annual regimental inspections. Regimental deployments were principally in the role of mounted policemen or in giving assistance to customs officers against smugglers.



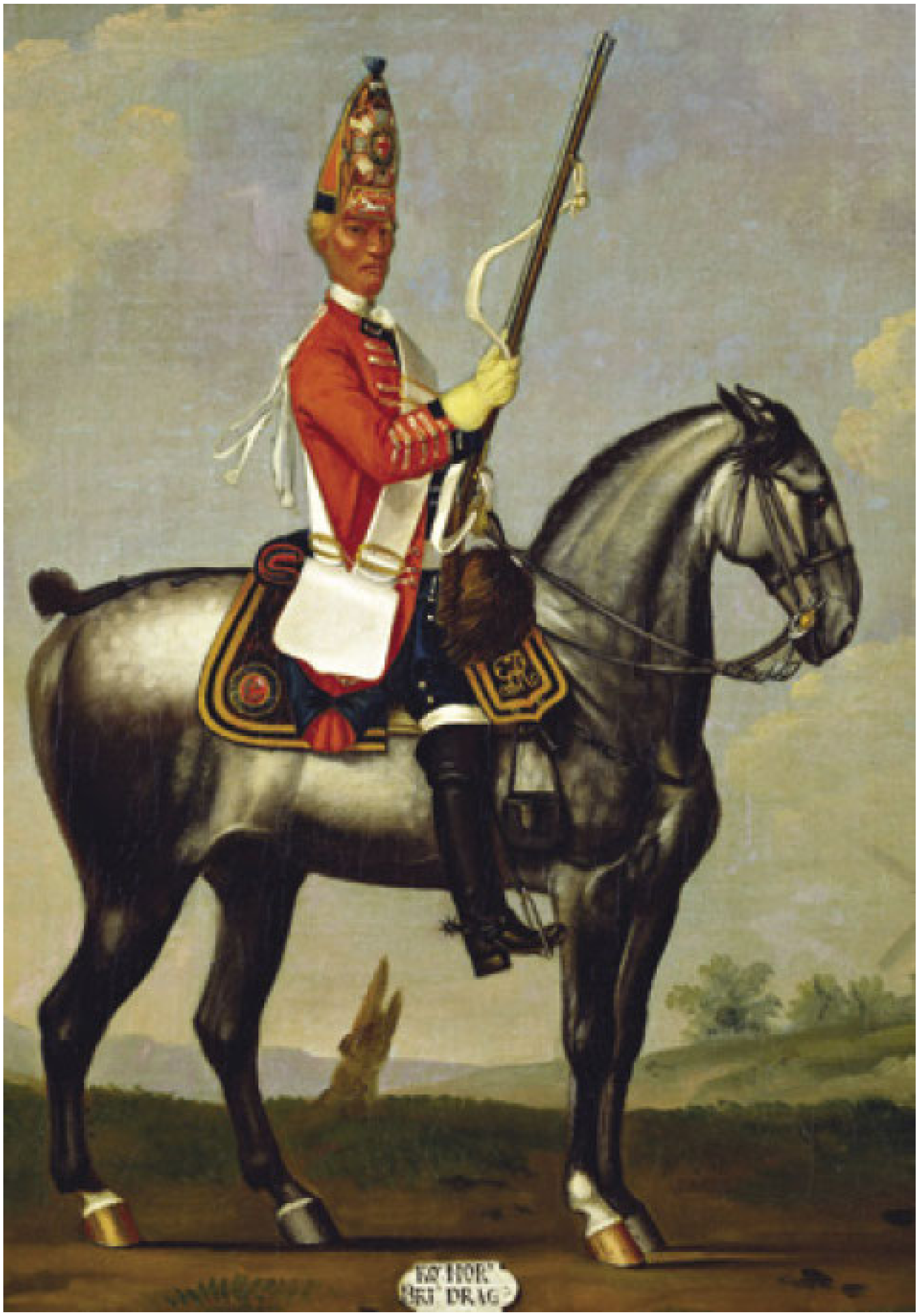
Cornet James Dalrymple, 2nd Dragoons. Dalrymple (1731–c. 1779/81) was commissioned cornet in 2nd Dragoons in 1749 and promoted lieutenant in January 1755. He left the regiment to purchase a captaincy in 9th Foot in November 1755 and exchanged to 6th Dragoons in 1759. He retired by sale of his commission in 1763. Oil on canvas by Sir George Chalmers, c. 1749. (By kind permission of James Thomson Esq. of Prestonfield House)

On 22 June 1742 the regiment embarked for the continent for the War of the Austrian Succession and participated in the battles of Dettingen in 1743, at which it captured a standard of the French Household Cavalry, and Fontenoy in 1745. At Dettingen, on 16 June 1743, the regiment's Colonel, The Honourable James Campbell of Lawers – who had been appointed a lieutenant-general in the previous year and given command of the cavalry for the campaign – led the British cavalry in a successful charge into the French Maison du Roi, much as he had done at Malplaquet thirty-four years earlier, and shattered them so successfully that he was invested as a Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath (KB) by the King on the battlefield at the conclusion of the action. At Fontenoy, on 30 April 1745, Campbell's luck finally ran out: after leading several indecisive charges against the French, he lost a leg to a cannon ball and subsequently died. The regiment was ordered home in October 1745 to help resist the Jacobite rebellion but encountered bad weather, which delayed the troopships; by the time that the weather allowed sailing, the rebellion was over. The Greys returned to Flanders in 1746 and remained there until May 1748. At the battle of Lauffeldt, or Val, in 1747 a charge by the regiment, the Inniskilling (6th) and the Queen's Own (7th) Dragoons saved defeat from becoming a rout, although at a cost to the regiment of casualties comprising over one-third of its strength.



The battle of Minden, 1 August 1759; coloured engraving, artist unknown, various publishers, c. 1760. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library; photo: R. Chartrand)

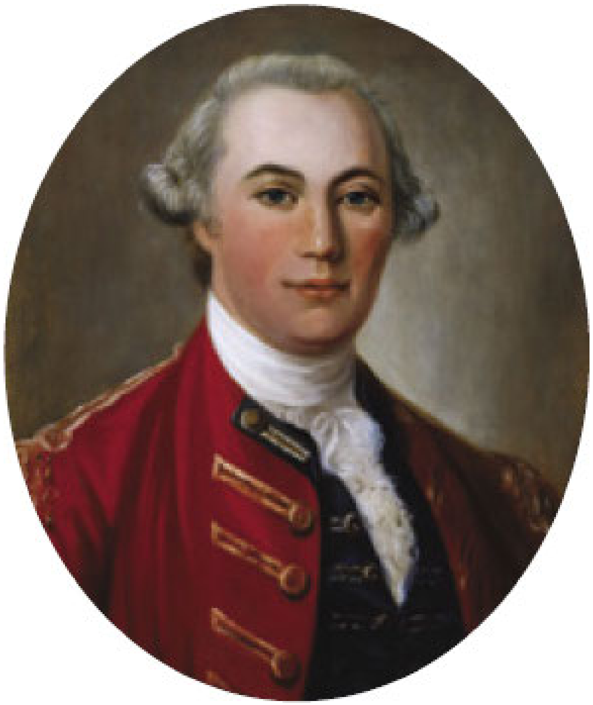
The regiment returned home in 1748 and was stationed in a number of locations throughout England for the next decade. In common with many other cavalry regiments, the regiment acquired a light troop in 1756; the officers and men of this troop wore a distinctive form of grenadier cap, different in size and construction from those worn by the remainder of the regiment, and were accoutred and trained as light cavalry. This troop was one of those which, allied to other regiments' light troops, formed what in the Second World War would have been called a 'commando' for raids on the French Channel coast after the outbreak of the Seven Years War in 1756; it was one of nine such units, including the light troop of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, which was involved, as a light cavalry brigade, in an offensive operation against St Malo in May 1758 and is said to have been in the brigade of light horse that participated in the assault upon Cherbourg in August 1758. On its return to Britain after the Cherbourg expedition, the regiment's light troop passed the remainder of the war being quartered in a variety of locations on the coast of southern England.



A private of 2nd Dragoons; oil on canvas by David Morier, 1751. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014)

The Lieutenant-Colonel in executive command of the regiment from 1750 was John Forbes (1707–59), who had joined the regiment as its surgeon before purchasing a cornet’s commission in 1735; he left the Greys in 1757 to be appointed a brigadier-general in America. In 1758 he led an expedition against the French-held Fort Duquesne, at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers in modern Pennsylvania, and, despite being so ill throughout that he had to be carried in a litter, directed the assault that persuaded the French to surrender the fort. In reporting the success of the mission to his superiors, Forbes made the first recorded use of the name ‘Pitts-Bourgh’ to describe the renamed fortification; subsequently, the city of Pittsburgh grew around the fort.

Another regimental officer of the period who was to make a name in America was Patrick Ferguson (1744–80). Ferguson was a nephew of James Murray (1722–94), who served as Wolfe’s junior brigadier at the capture of Quebec in 1759; Murray became governor of Quebec and subsequently of Menorca and died a general. Ferguson was purchased a cornetcy in the regiment in 1759 and seems to have joined the army in Germany in 1761 but saw little action and was invalided home, with a leg ailment, early in 1763. He remained with the regiment until 1768, when as senior cornet he obtained a captaincy in the 70th Regiment of Foot. While with the 70th, Ferguson developed improvements upon a form of early breech-loading flintlock rifle and led a corps of riflemen, armed with his weapon, in action during the American War of Independence. Seriously wounded at the battle of Brandywine in September 1777, Ferguson was promoted major in the 2nd Battalion of the 71st Foot in October 1779 and given a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy two months later, before being killed in action at the battle of King’s Mountain on 7 October 1780; he is remembered by historians of firearms as the developer of the first British military breech-loading flintlock rifle.

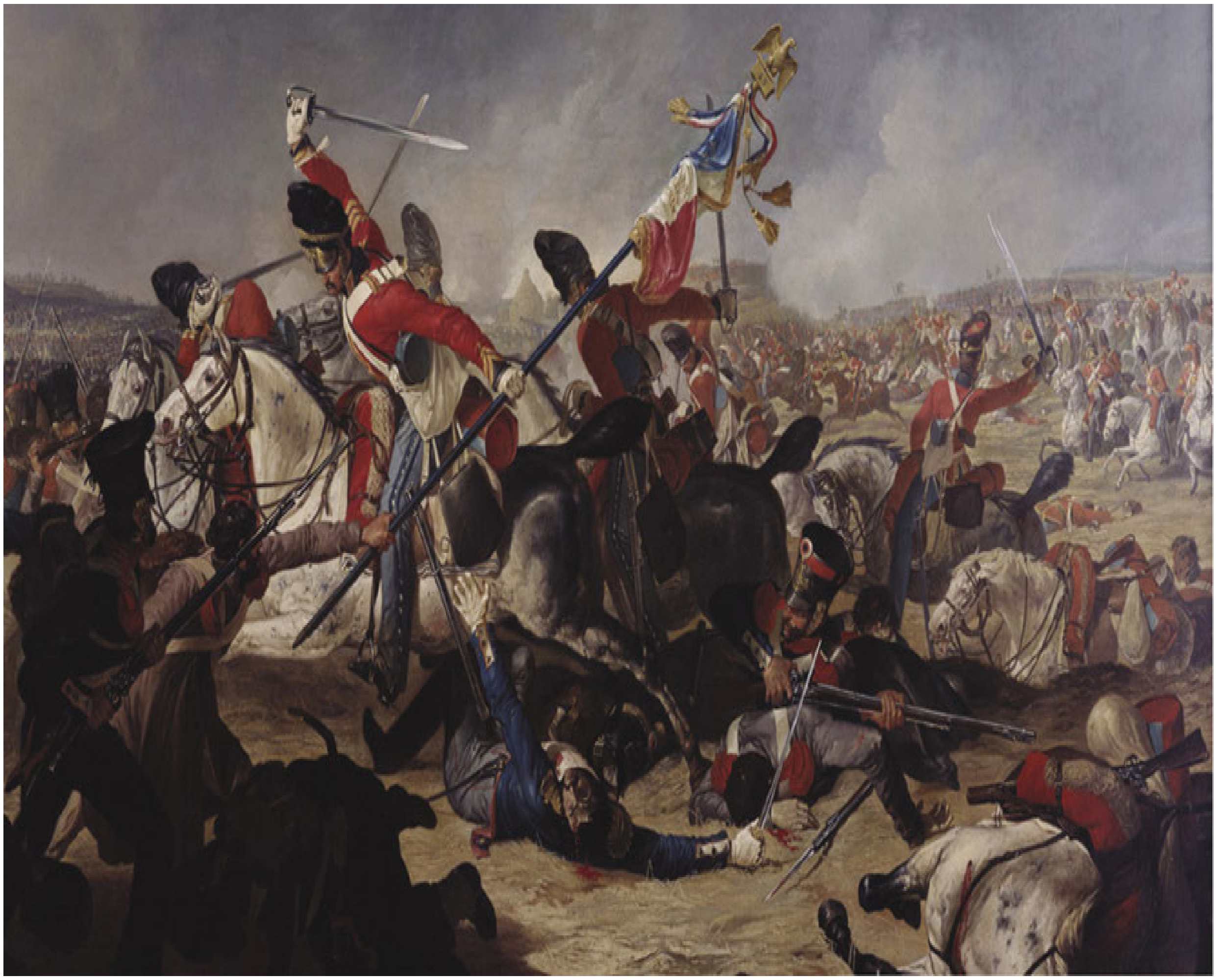


John Forbes (1707–59) depicted in the artist's idea of the uniform of 2nd Dragoons c. 1756; oil on canvas attributed to Thomas Robertson Aikman, 20th century.

The regiment as a whole left Britain for Flanders on 20 July 1758, being based in Germany 1760–63, and was in action at the battles of Minden in 1759 and of Warburg in 1760, suffering minimal casualties; the battle honour for Warburg was awarded in 1909. The remainder of the campaign was relatively uneventful and the regiment returned to Scotland in May 1763, being stationed at Dalkeith and Musselburgh for the remainder of that year.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER TWO

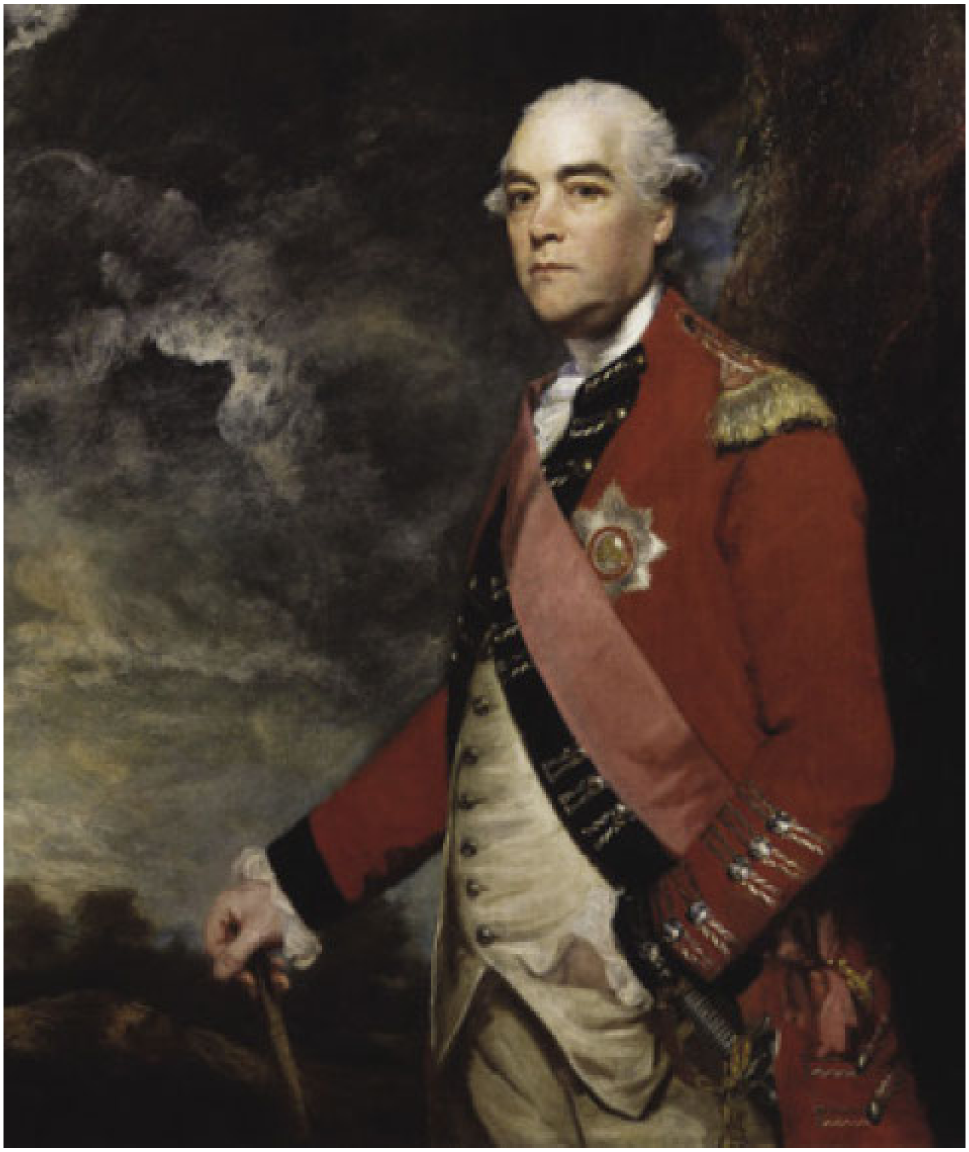


The Battle of Waterloo: the Charge of the Second Brigade of Cavalry; oil on canvas by Denis Dighton, c. 1816–17. The Union Brigade constituted Wellington's 2nd Cavalry Brigade at Waterloo; Sergeant Ewart can be seen in the act of cutting down the standard-bearer of the French 45th Regiment of the Line. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014 / Bridgeman Images)

3RD DRAGOON GUARDS

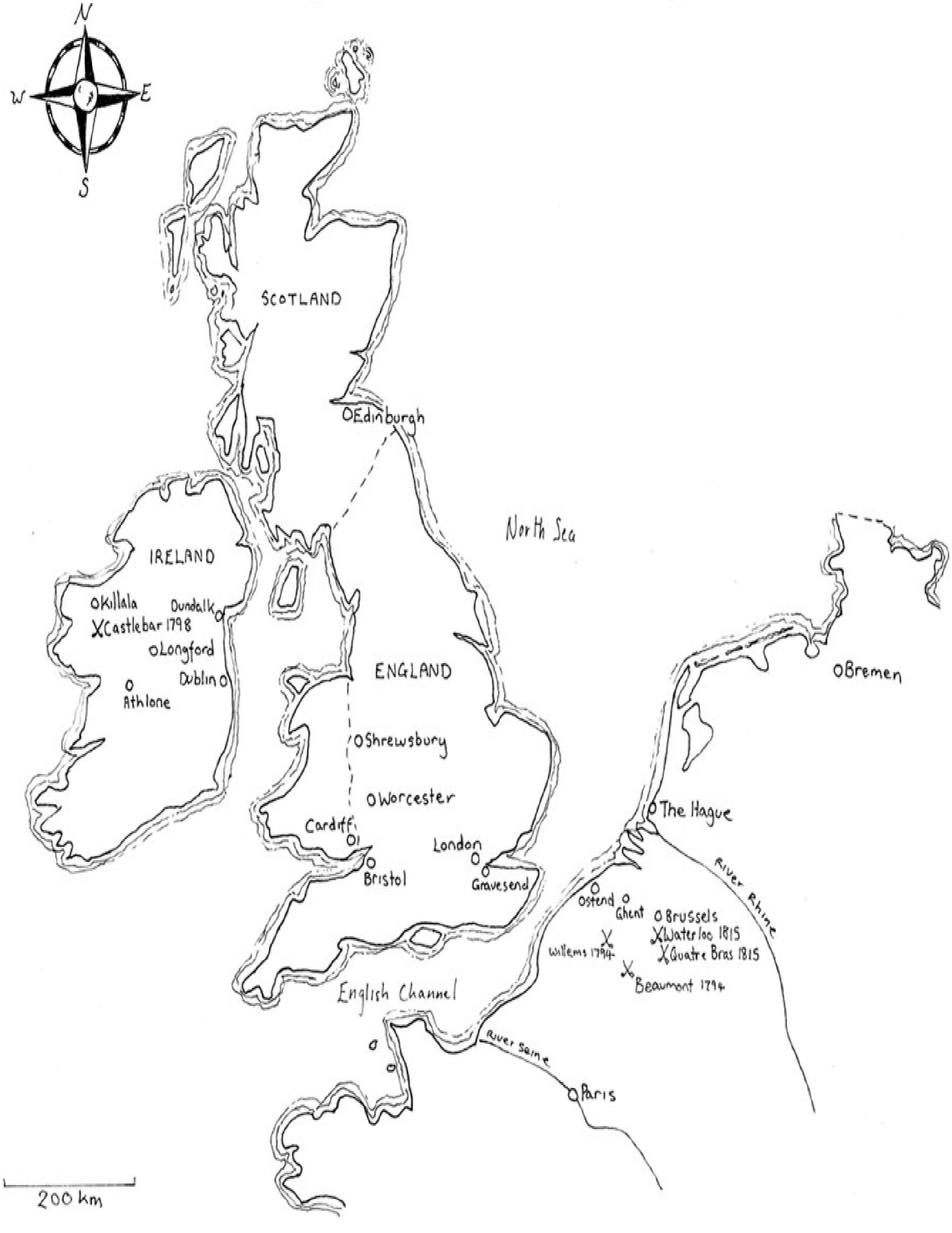
In 1765 the regiment was granted the subsidiary title '(or The Prince of Wales's)' and all its appointments were altered to incorporate the badges and devices associated with HRH The Prince of Wales, who was just three years old at the time but who eventually became King George IV. The practice of giving honorary titles of this kind to regiments grew inexorably through the 18th and 19th centuries and was maintained by the large families of King George III and Queen Victoria, the majority of whose offspring managed, at some point, to have their title (or that of their consort or children) associated with one or more British regiments. The use of a royal title in a regiment's title did not always indicate that there was a personal association with the regiment concerned.

In the three decades between the ending of the Seven Years War in 1763 and the beginning of the wars against Revolutionary France in 1793, the regiment remained in Britain, quartered in a wide variety of locations from Scotland to the south coast. The docking of the horses' tails, which had been the practice in the British cavalry since at least the 16th century, was stopped in 1764 and trumpeters replaced drummers on the regimental establishment in 1766. Despite Britain being at peace, it was really a period of 'cold war' with France, a nation the British government felt would seize every opportunity to exploit any weaknesses in Britain's defences or newly gained empire and use any means to recover the territories gained by Britain during the Seven Years War. The perceived threat of Jacobitism remained constant in the 1760s and 1770s and Jacobites were regarded almost as constituting a potential fifth column in Britain, even though Prince Charles Edward Stuart – the Young Pretender – was an exiled, pathetic and drink-sodden figure who presented little real danger to Britain's stability. Smuggling continued and the regiment continued its role as mounted policemen in aid of the customs and excise authorities. The outbreak of war with the thirteen colonies of the embryonic United States of America in 1775 resulted in a slight increase in the establishments of most regiments but the regiment remained uninvolved. The American War of Independence was principally fought by infantry and light cavalry, the country and tactics of the enemy being far from suited to the traditional shock-tactic role of heavy cavalry.



General Sir William Fawcett KB (1728–1804); oil on canvas by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1784, with the broad riband and star of the Bath added 1786. Fawcett was Colonel of 3rd Dragoon Guards 1792–1804 and was painted in the uniform of adjutant-general, a post that he held 1781–99. (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

Great Britain, Ireland and north-west Europe 1764–1815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OBremen
The Hague
River Rhine
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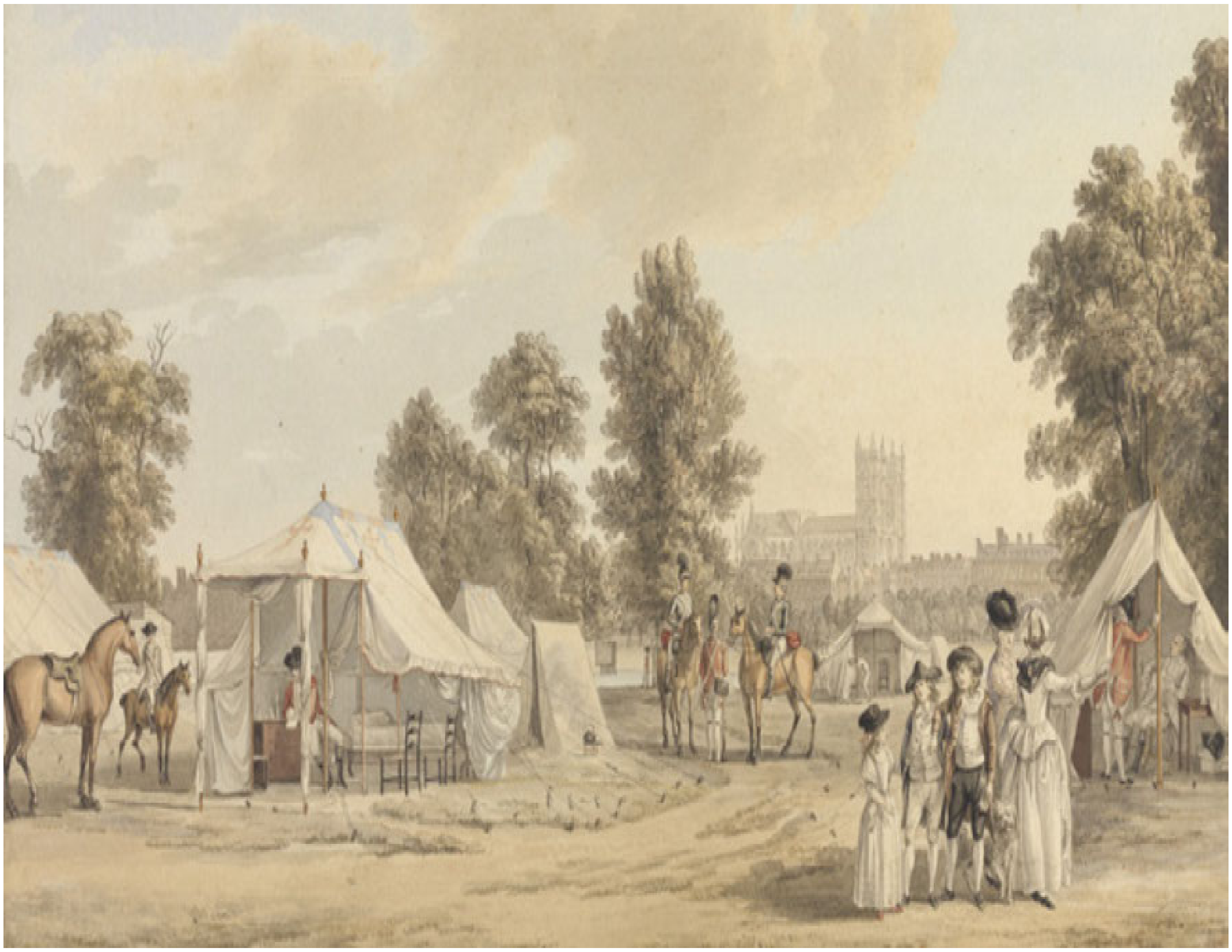
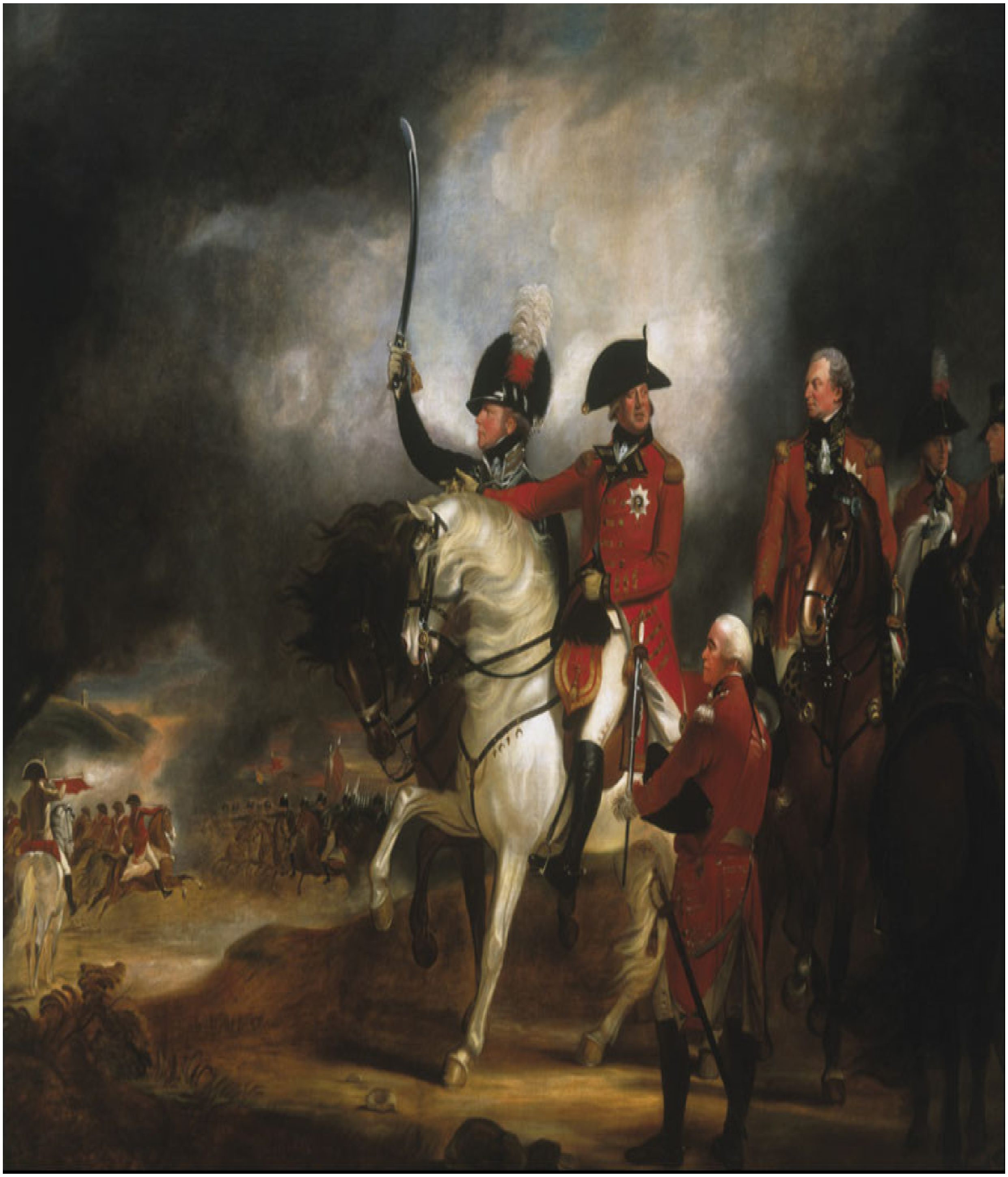


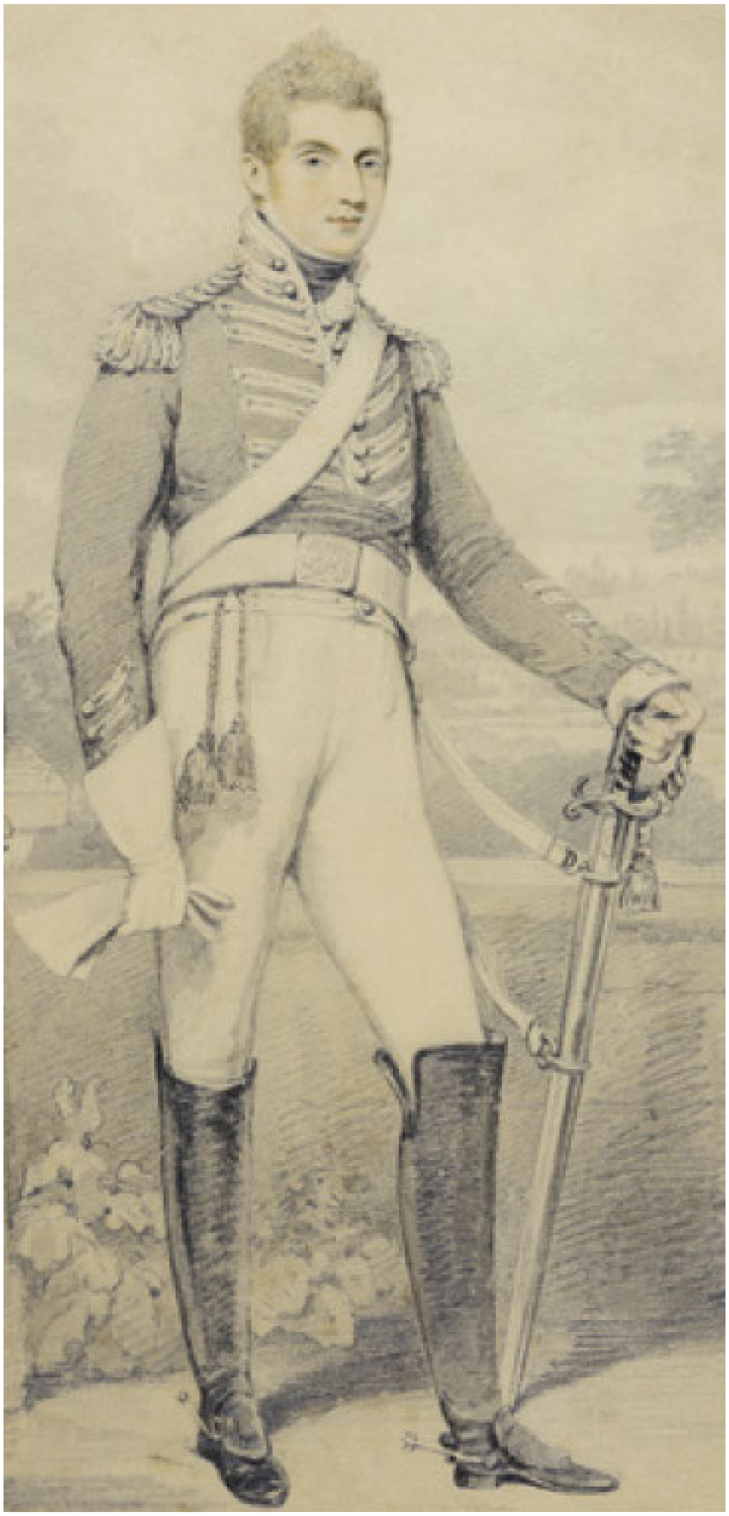
View of the encampment in St James's Park; pen, ink and watercolour over graphite by Paul Sandby, c. 1780. Temporary military camps were established in some of the London parks at the time of the Gordon Riots. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection)

A combination of the danger from France and that presented by Jacobitism – both seen as being linked with the supposed mendacity of the Roman Catholic Church – meant that it was never difficult throughout the 18th century to whip up anti-Catholic hysteria, especially among the London mob, whose reputation and capacity for rapacious violence was, justifiably, internationally notorious. In 1778, France entered the American War of Independence on the side of the rebellious colonists and this turned a rebellion in North America into a global war that necessitated an increase in the size of the British army. By that time, the British government was aware that any threat to internal stability presented by Roman Catholics was more imaginary than real, so it introduced legislation authorising, for the first time since 1688, the recruitment of Roman Catholics into the ranks of the armed forces. Although Catholics could still not be commissioned, this change in legislation – despite being for reasons of national security – resulted in widespread rioting. This became particularly serious in London in 1780 and, because of their orchestration by Lord George Gordon, these riots are known as the Gordon riots; Gordon was an MP and fervent Protestant whose eccentricities eventually descended into madness. By the time that the regiment arrived in London from Shrewsbury to back up the troops already engaged against the rioters, large parts of the City of London and its environs were no-go areas for the authorities and a great deal of damage had been done to the property of real and suspected Roman Catholics or those perceived by the mob to be in favour of a relaxation in the anti-Catholic penal laws. The regiment was involved in suppressing the riots but no detailed records exist of its actual part in restoring law and order.



King George III, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York at a review; commissioned by the King in 1797, the original of this painting (destroyed by fire at Windsor Castle in 1992) showed 3rd Dragoon Guards, in the left distance, exercising in mock combat with 10th Light

Dragoons – both regiments being ‘The Prince of Wales’s’; General Sir William Fawcett KB is shown, dismounted, talking to the King. Oil on canvas, attributed to George Beechey, c. 1830, after Sir William Beechey, c. 1797. (National Army Museum, London/Bridgeman Images)



Sotherton Branthwayt Peckham Micklethwait (1786–1853) as a lieutenant in 3rd Dragoon Guards; joining the regiment in 1803,

Micklethwait retired as a captain in 1808; pencil and wash by Henry Edridge, 1806. (Private collection)

A further decade of postings within Britain followed until 1793, when four troops of the regiment embarked for the war in the Low Countries that had begun against Revolutionary France that spring. The force of which they were part was commanded by the younger brother of the Prince of Wales, HRH The Prince Frederick, Duke of York, a career soldier whose exploits in Flanders were, somewhat unfairly, to be ridiculed in a nursery rhyme. At this period, little attention was given to training for war and operations against smugglers or a discontented civilian population had done little to prepare the regiment, after thirty years of peacetime service, for the realities of what it was to encounter on the European continent. Initially successful, the campaign literally floundered when the French redoubled their attacks on British positions that had become waterlogged by the opening of the dykes. Having fought their way out of the resulting morass, the British went on to conduct a campaign in alliance with the Austrians, Dutch and Prussians, an alliance that rapidly collapsed in the face of mounting French strength and success in battle. The regiment took a major part in two battles, at Beaumont and at Willems, in April and May 1794, both of which not only demonstrated how far its training had improved through battlefield experience but also showed British cavalry in its most effective light: at Willems the regiment was part of a cavalry attack that managed to break into a number of French squares of infantry. The casualties of the 3rd at Beaumont were, with those of the Royal Horse Guards, the heaviest suffered by the British cavalry at that battle: two officers and sixteen men killed, with five officers wounded. The regiment's part in both battles eventually resulted in the grant of the two battle honours 'Beaumont' and 'Willems' in 1909. The winter of 1794 in Flanders was an appallingly harsh one and Britain's allies were proving unequal to continuing the campaign; thus, in 1795, the British force re-embarked for England, leaving northern continental Europe to the largely uninterrupted rule of France for the next two decades.

With France triumphant on the European continent, and Britain largely bereft of consistent and committed allies, virtually all troops in Britain were placed on an anti-invasion footing until well after the naval battle of

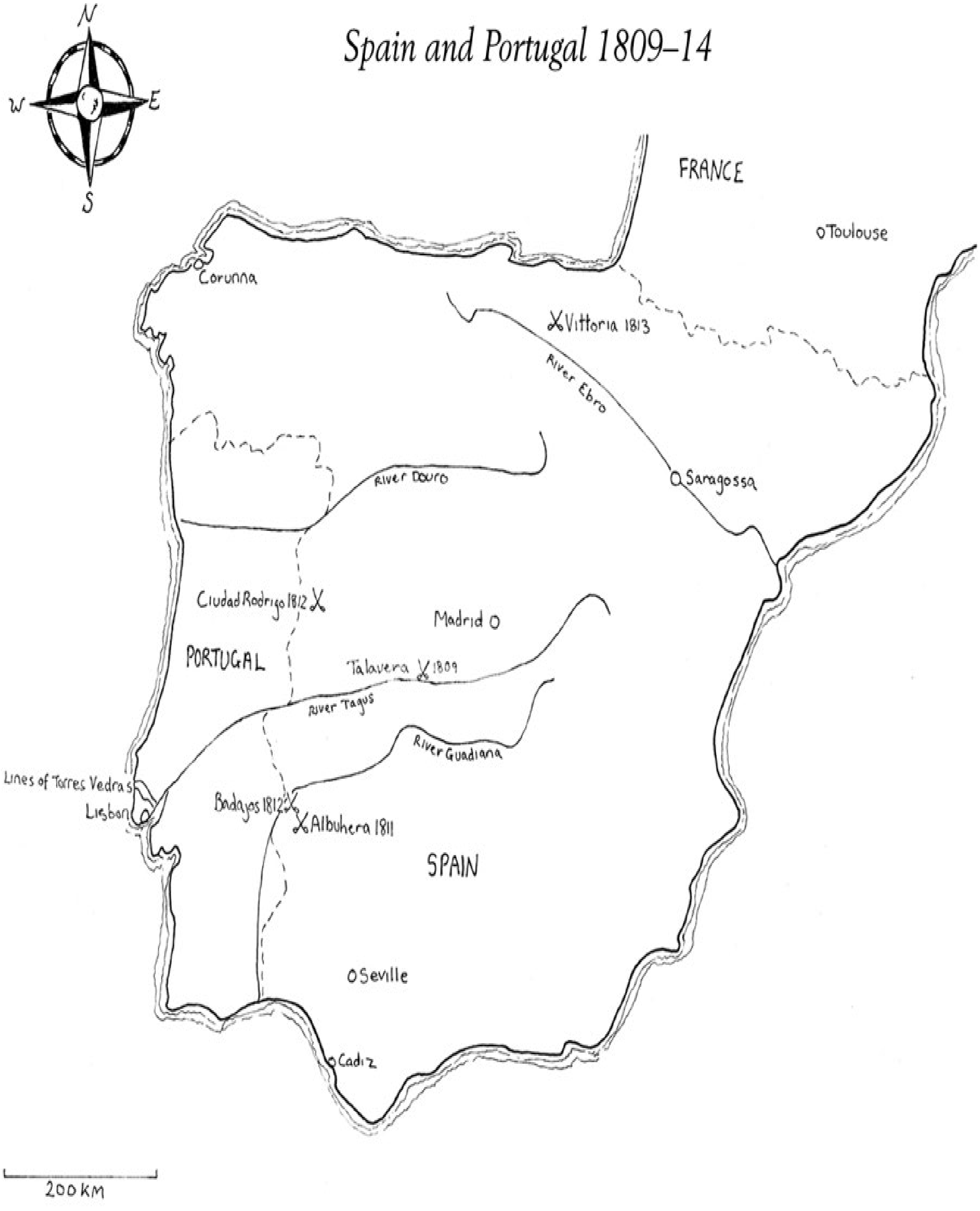
Trafalgar in October 1805. In this, they were accompanied by hastily raised units of yeomanry cavalry and volunteer infantry, whose enthusiasm for part-time soldiering and pride in their dashing appearance often made them objects of cynical amusement to the regular troops who had experienced the reality of conflict. The regiment was quartered in various locations in England until 1803, when it moved to Scotland for a year, prior to embarkation for Ireland in 1804; it remained stationed in a number of quarters in Ireland until 1808. To its fears of invasion by France the British government added the fear that some of its subjects might not be averse to the replacement of the British monarchy by a French government run on republican lines. Although this concern diminished after the coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte as the Emperor Napoleon in 1804, an awareness of the activities of foreign agents and of a fifth column continued, especially in Ireland, making the years prior to the beginning of the Peninsular War in 1808 far from relaxing ones for the 3rd Dragoon Guards.

Although the victories and deployment of the Royal Navy had appeared to secure Britain against invasion, the government realised that France could not be defeated on land by the navy and that, if the war were to be ended, a defeat for France on land was essential: this meant deploying military force. Invasion of the European continent was the only way this could be achieved and a number of options were desultorily explored, with only limited success, before the Iberian Peninsula became the site of the second front in 1808; this occurred because in May of that year the Spanish rose in revolt against their French former allies. Although an initial attempt at establishing a British army presence in Spain and Portugal in 1808 failed, invasion was tried again in the following year and, in April 1809, the regiment landed in Lisbon as part of a cavalry brigade in the army commanded by the then relatively unknown Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley KB.

In the briefest of terms, Wellesley’s plans were centred upon an invasion of France via Spain and he was aided in his goal by the fact that Napoleon had alienated the Spanish by imposing his elder brother, Joseph, upon them as king, thus adding to Spanish resentment at the French occupation of Spain which had been the cause of the revolt of May 1808. Wellesley therefore had the support of both the Portuguese and Spanish armies, which were immense on paper if of variable reliability in practice, together with the help of Spanish partisans whose concept of warfare – especially against the French –

was savage in the extreme. In order to get to France, starting from Portugal, the British and their allies had therefore to march across Spain. After the establishment of a solid bridgehead in Portugal during 1809 and into 1810, the campaign through Spain took four years (1810–14) and every step of the way was bloodily contested by a series of French armies, commanded by a succession of French marshals. As his success rate mounted, so Sir Arthur Wellesley was promoted through each step of the peerage until, as Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington KG, he and his campaign-tested army entered France in 1814.

Spain and Portugal 1809–14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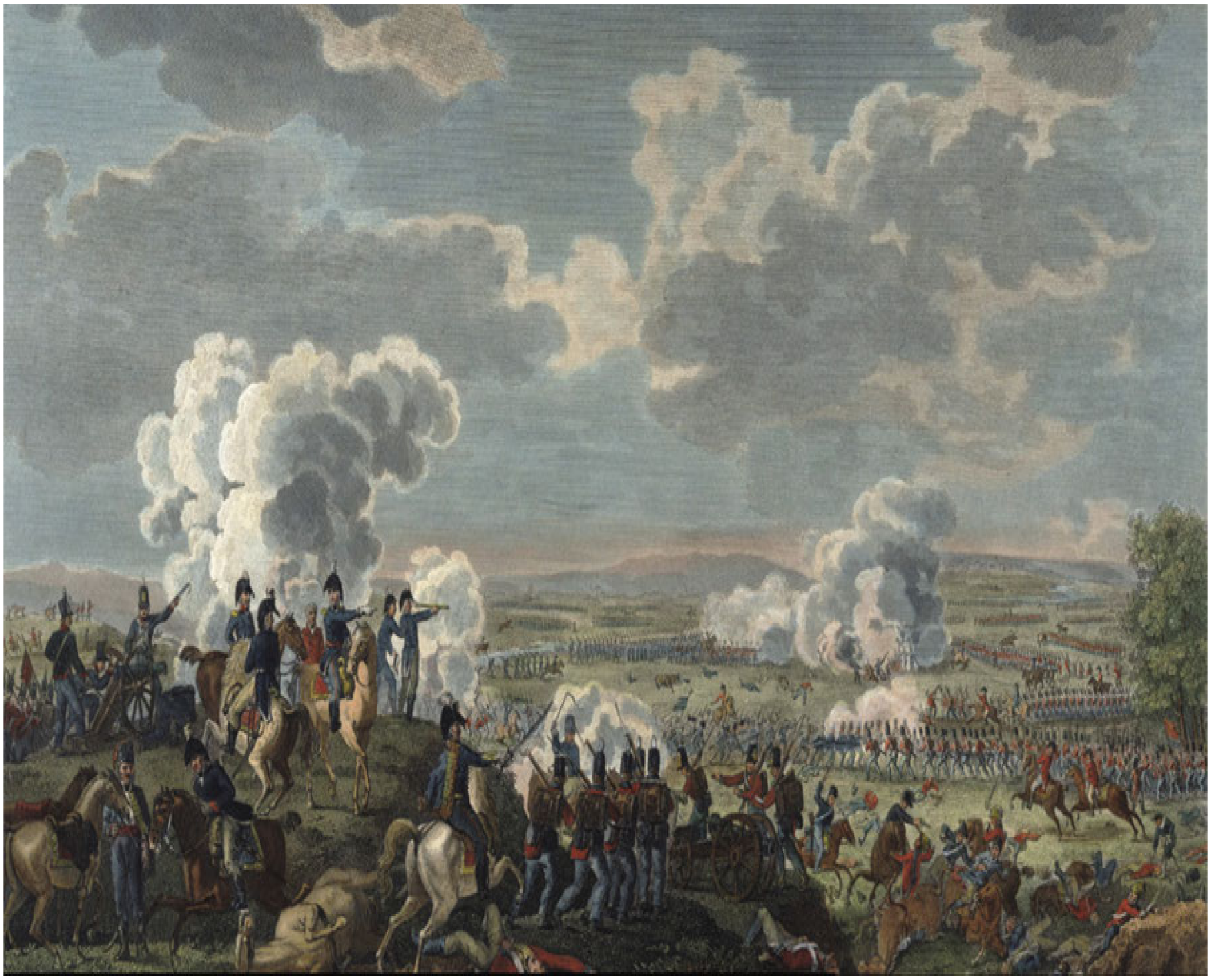
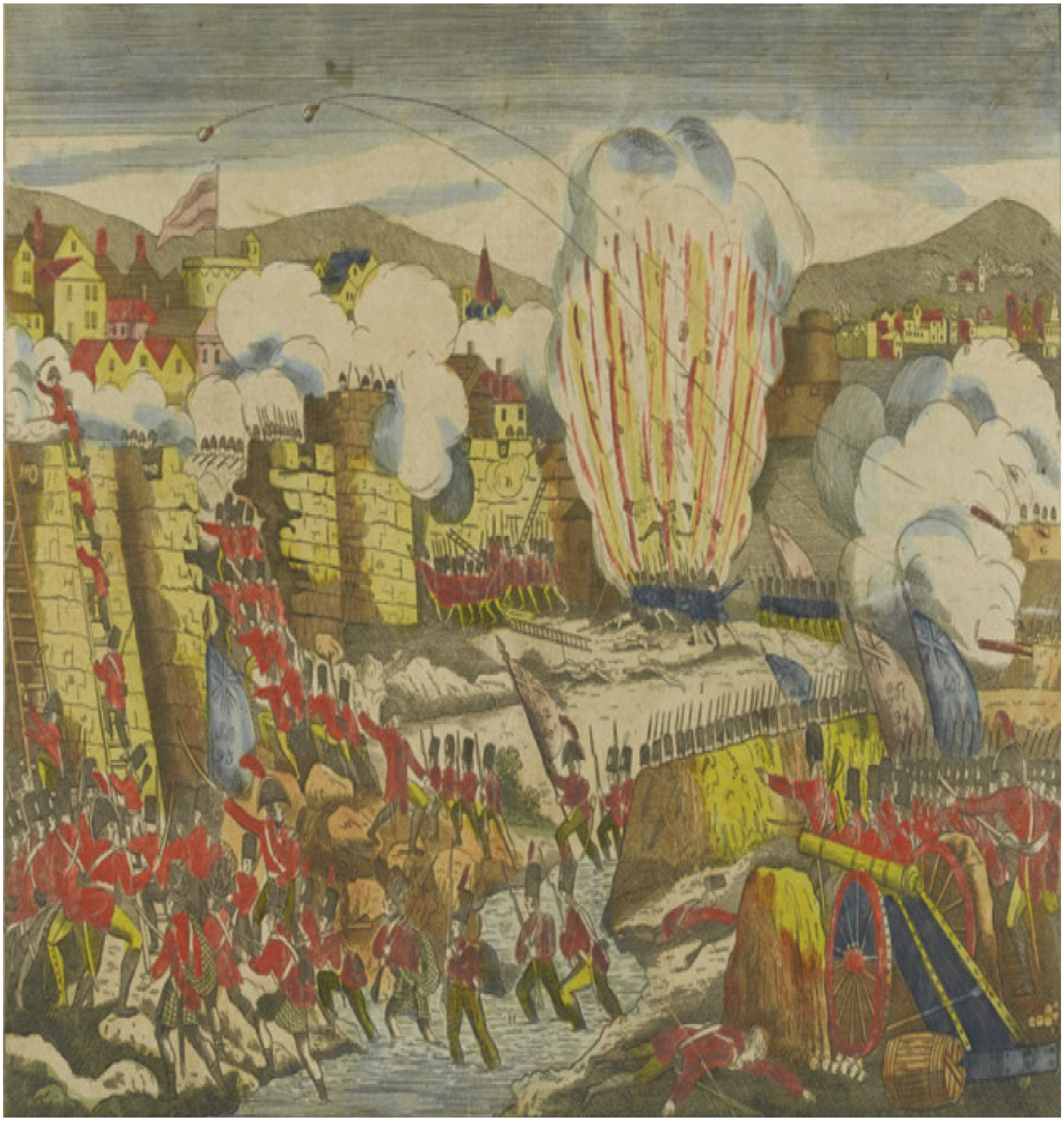


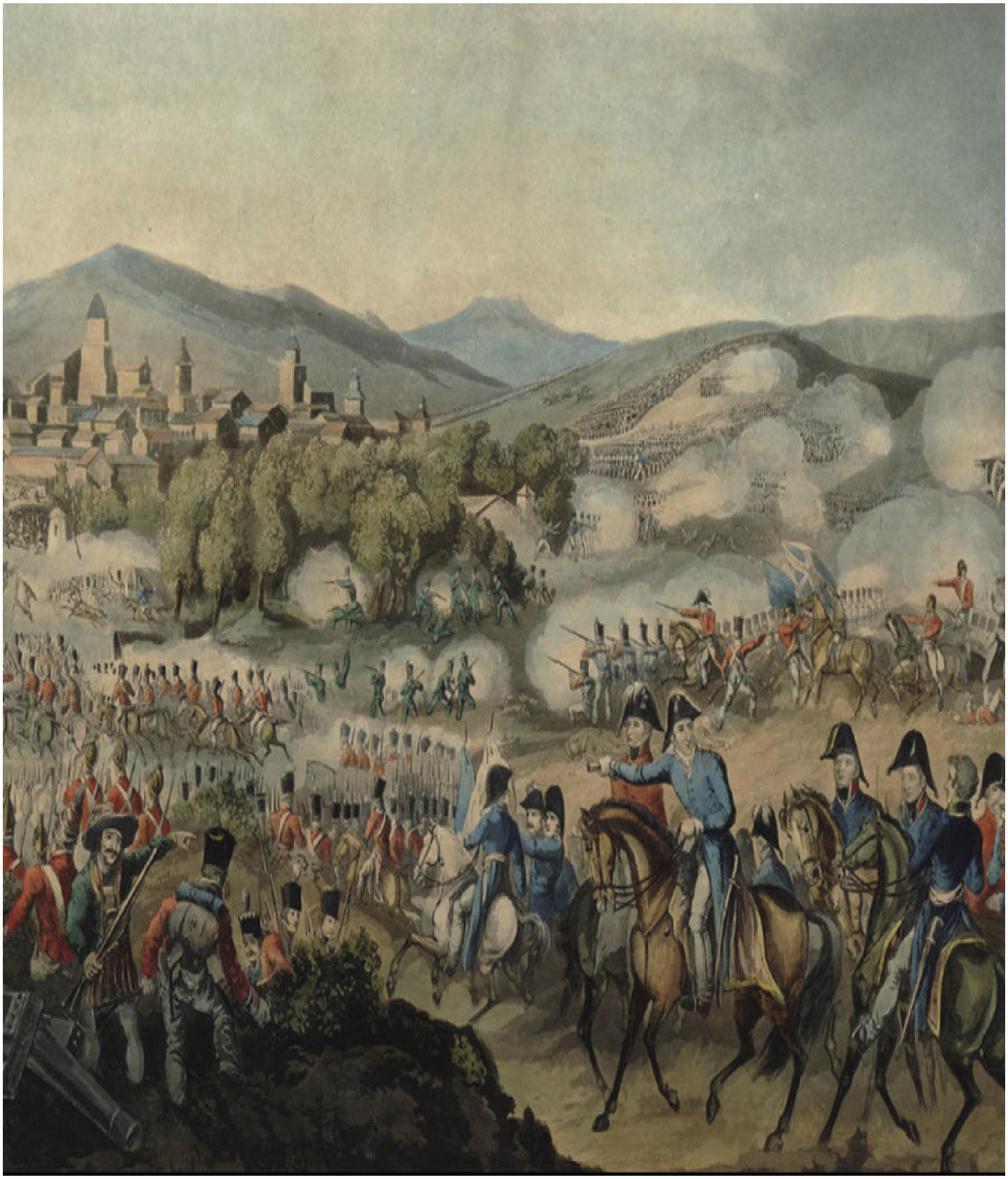
The battle of Talavera, 27–28 July 1809; coloured engraving by J. Vendramini after H. Leveque, published by Colnaghi, 1813. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

The 3rd Dragoon Guards' first major Peninsular battle was at Talavera in July 1809. Like so many Peninsular battles, it was principally an infantry engagement. The regiment attempted to repeat its square-breaking success of Willems but failed and was principally used to contain the French and engage them on their flanks. Talavera was a bloody battle, resulting in some 5,000 British casualties, and an indecisive one after which Wellington retreated into Portugal to regroup and to establish impregnable fortifications behind which his army could recover and be reinforced. The 3rd, along with the other cavalry, covered the retreat into Portugal and frequently skirmished with the French advance guard in consequence. The British remained effectively under siege, although constantly supplied by sea by the Royal Navy, until 1810 when the French, disease-ridden and poorly supplied, were forced to withdraw. Wellington then broke out from behind his fortifications – the Lines of Torres Vedras – and, with the regiment acting as scouts ahead of the part of the army commanded by Major General William Beresford, moved into Spain again. At the battle of Albuhera in May 1811 the regiment was placed on the right flank and sustained small losses in decimating a French lancer regiment in what was, again, a foot soldiers' battle of appalling carnage.

The Peninsular War was characterised by sieges of strategically sited cities and the regiment was present at those of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos in 1812 as well as being used by Wellington in various manoeuvres intended to disguise his true intentions from the French. After a short retreat upon Ciudad Rodrigo in 1812, Wellington again advanced towards France in 1813, the rapidity of his progress taking the French rather by surprise. The 3rd Dragoon Guards were involved in the final rolling-up stages of the battle of Vittoria in June 1813 and captured guns and supply wagons as well as routing a French column, suffering only minimal casualties in consequence. The invasion of south-west France began in 1814 and, coordinated (largely by coincidence) with Napoleon's defeats in the east, ended the twenty years' war against France in that year. The regiment returned home in July 1814 and in April 1815 was awarded the battle honour 'Peninsula' for its participation throughout the campaign, which Napoleon referred to as the 'Spanish ulcer' that had eventually destroyed him. Three further battle honours for specific battles followed later: 'Talavera' and 'Vittoria' in 1826 and 'Albuhera' in 1837. Although not deployed on the European continent for the brief resumption of the war that was finally ended at the battle of Waterloo in June 1815, the 3rd spent the period July 1815 to January 1816 in France as part of the Army of Occupation.



The storming and taking of Ciudad Rodrigo, 19 January 1812; coloured engraving by an unknown artist, published by Oliver and Boyd, 1812. (National Army Museum, London/Bridgeman Images)

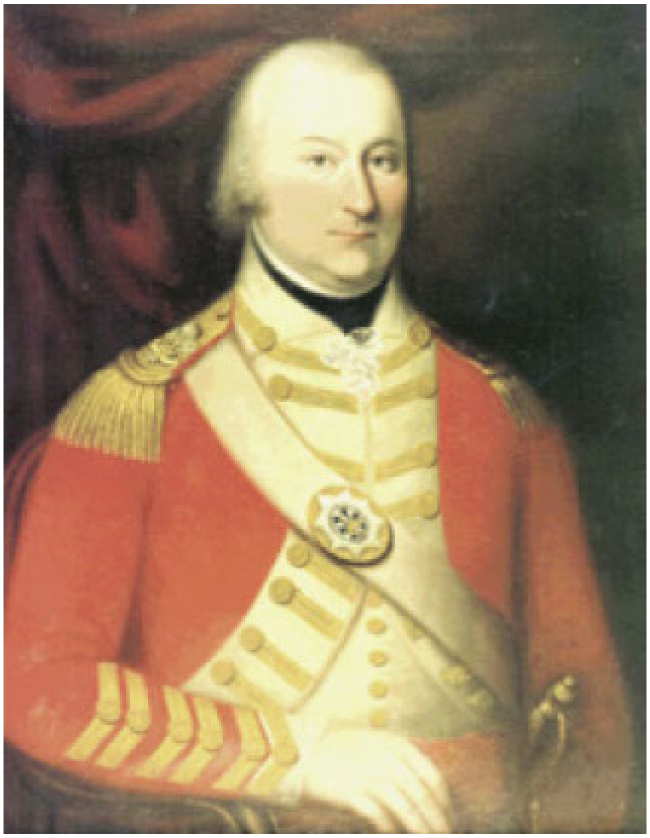


The battle of Vittoria, 21 June 1813; coloured aquatint by T. Sutherland after W. Heath, published by Laird, 1836. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

Afurther Clothing Warrant was issued in 1768. Under its terms, a new form of grenadier cap was ordered for the Greys, but not actually issued until 1778. It was black bearskin with a metal plate in front, bearing the Thistle, St Andrew and the words ‘Nemo Me Impune Lacessit’. A red cloth top represented the bag of the former mitre cap. These caps were reserved for formal duties, bicornes being worn on other occasions.

The horse regiments now conformed to dragoon guards in wearing white waistcoats and breeches; coats were lapelled to the waist, and the Carabiniers’ facings changed to white. Officers’ sashes were once again worn around the waist, under the coat, while their sword-belts were fastened over the right shoulder by an ornate plate.

From 1787 epaulettes were worn on both shoulders (as had been the practice in the Greys since 1784). The following year the remaining horse regiments, including the Carabiniers, were converted to dragoon guards.



An unidentified officer of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, c. 1790. (Private collection)

From 1770 the tricorne hat gradually evolved into a bicorne, worn sideways. In 1794 the lace edging to the brim was discontinued, but from 1796 an upright feather plume, originally white but later white over red, was worn behind the cockade.

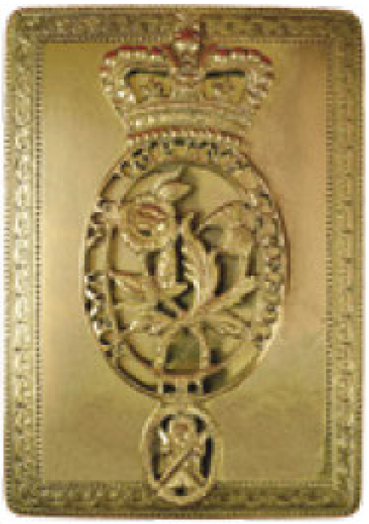
In 1796, for dragoon guards and dragoons, a short-skirted, single-breasted jacket, buttoned from the waist to the neck, replaced the double-breasted full-skirted coat. This jacket had a collar and cuffs of the regimental facing colour and buttonholes edged with lace or braid. In 1796, the 3rd Dragoon Guards wore white facings and gold or yellow lace and the Carabiniers had white facings and silver or white lace. The 2nd Dragoons had blue facings; their lace was gold for officers but white for soldiers until 1811.

The edgings on buttonholes gradually became wider and longer, eventually forming loops that covered most of the wearer's chest. On active service, metal scales, known as wings, protected the shoulders against sword cuts. Officers wore a white leather shoulder-belt carrying a pouch for pistol ammunition. Other ranks now wore a white leather carbine-belt over the left shoulder and sword-scabbards were attached by slings to a white leather waist-belt fastened by an oblong plate. In addition to the sword-belt, officers also wore a crimson silk waist-sash. Breeches were of white leather or plush, and the black boots had stiffened tops to protect the knee.

The bicorne hat, originally worn sideways, was generally worn fore-and-aft from about 1805. For the Greys, a new pattern of bearskin, later worn at Waterloo, was introduced. It had a gilt or brass plate above a projecting leather peak, metal chinscales, a plaited and tasselled cord (gold for officers, yellow after 1811 for privates) across the front, and a white feather plume. A red cloth patch at the back bore the Horse of Hanover. The Greys also wore bicornes for less formal occasions.

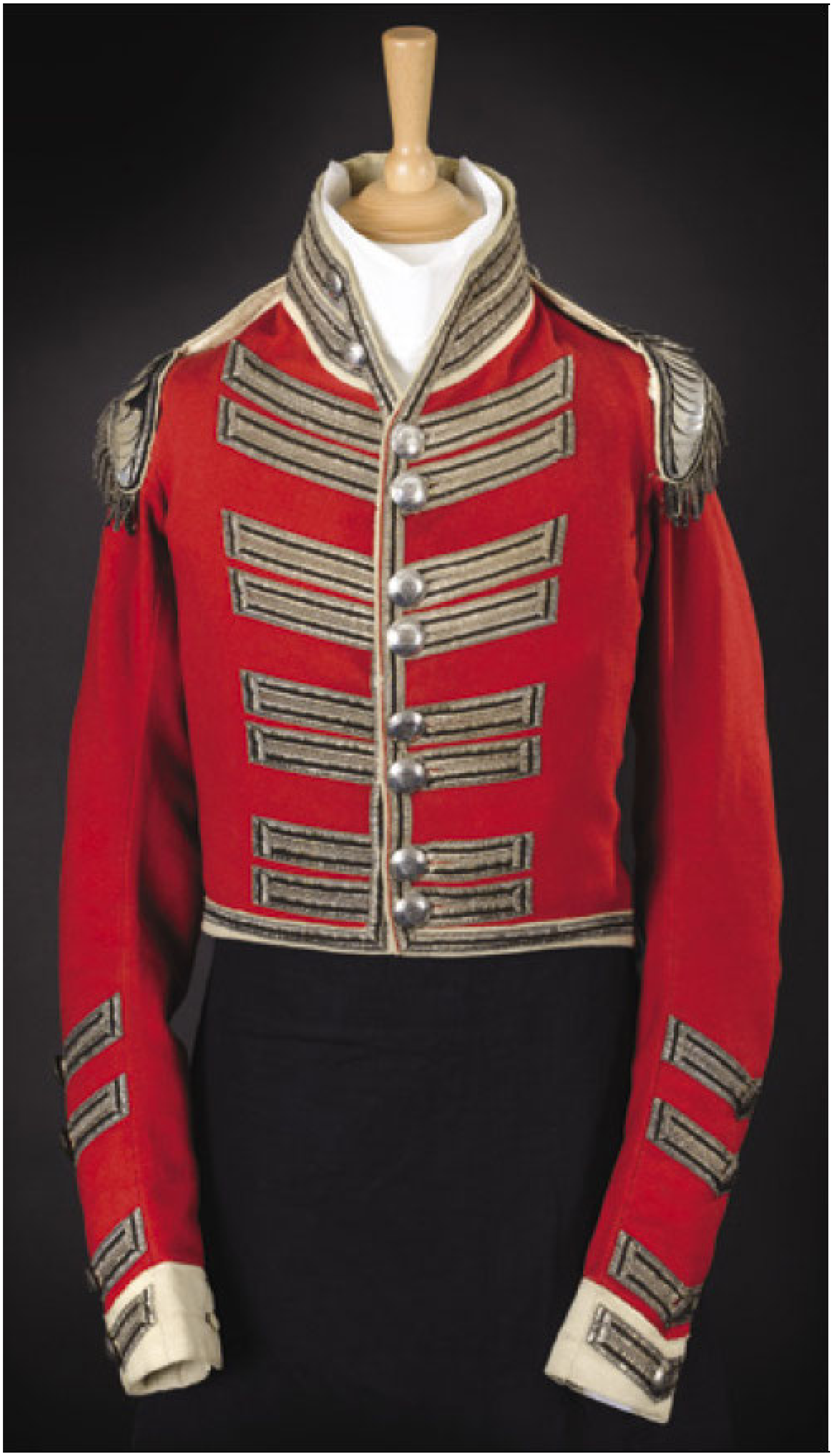
In addition to the jacket, a more formal coat, known as a coatee, was introduced for officers. This had loops of lace on the chest similar to those on the jacket, but tails (always referred to as skirts) reaching almost to the back of the knee. The skirts were lined with white cloth and folded back on each side to show a white edging known as a turnback. Coatees were worn, with knee-breeches, stockings and a smallsword (derived from a rapier), for dismounted formal occasions such as levees or the King's Drawing Room.

Charles Webb



Officer’s shoulder-belt plate, 2nd Dragoons c. 1790.

Officer’s coatee, 2nd Dragoons c. 1811.



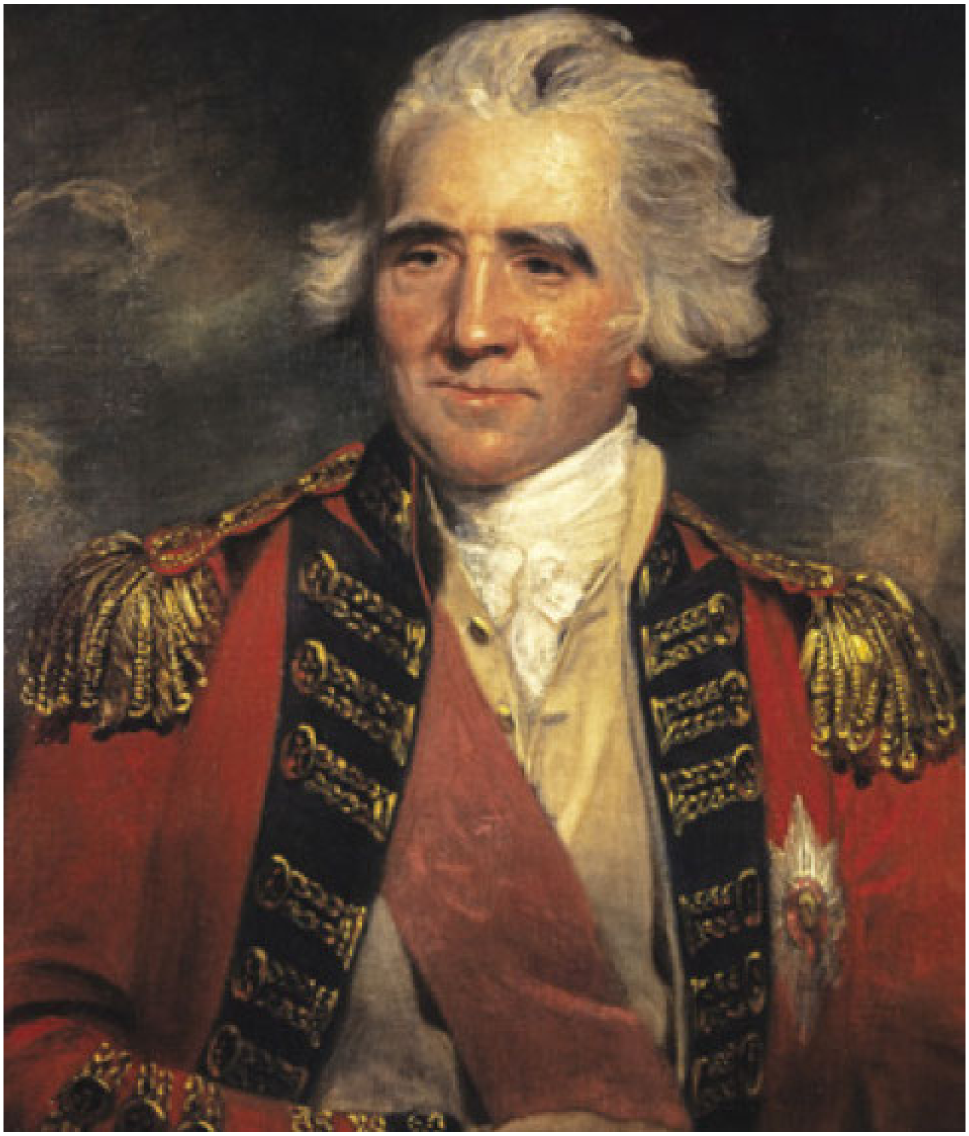
Officer’s jacket, 6th Dragoon Guards c. 1805.

6TH DRAGOON GUARDS

Being stationed in Ireland since 1713 had resulted in the regiment becoming largely Irish in composition. Statistics show that officers of Irish birth noticeably outnumbered the remainder and this should come as no surprise if one considers that the Carabiniers were stationed in that island for seventy-seven years of the 18th century; recruitment of other ranks would also have taken place in Ireland, although until the late 1770s only Protestants could be enlisted. Late in the 18th century, the largely Irish composition of the Officers’ Mess gave cause for concern about the level of very heavy drinking and frequent duelling that went on there. At that time, a high consumption of alcohol was usual in Ireland, at all social levels and even by the standards of the time elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and the island’s young gentlemen had an international and justified reputation for duelling with each other at the slightest provocation. After their return from the European continent in 1763, the Carabiniers remained in Ireland, on garrison duty and acting as mounted policemen, for the next thirty years. Their regimental strength was reduced to twenty soldiers per troop, in the interests of economy rather than efficiency, but there seems to be no evidence that the regiment’s duties in Ireland necessitated a larger complement. All the government in London was really concerned about as regards Ireland was that it should remain peaceful, by force if necessary, and not represent a realistic springboard for a French invasion of the mainland. Except at times of widespread civil disobedience, the Irish posting was a fairly relaxed one for officers and men, with the result that discipline became slack, officers frequently absenting themselves for long periods or seeking refuge from boredom

in alcohol. When the Dublin garrison erupted into near mutiny in 1765 the 3rd Horse was one of the few units to remain uninfected.

Regiments posted to Ireland and therefore on the Irish military establishment were paid less than those stationed in England or Scotland – on the British military establishment – because the cost of living was cheaper; this lower standard of pay was reflected in the price charged for officers' commissions. Prior to 1870, and except in the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, most officers had to buy their commissions and their promotions, particularly in peacetime. The difference between the price of a commission or promotion in a regiment of horse between mainland Britain and Ireland was of the order of about £400– £500 (roughly £25,000–£31,000 in the early 21st century); a cornet's (or second lieutenant's) commission in the Carabiniers in 1767 would have cost £1,067 (about £68,000 in the early 21st century) instead of £1,600 (about £102,000) because the regiment was stationed in Ireland.

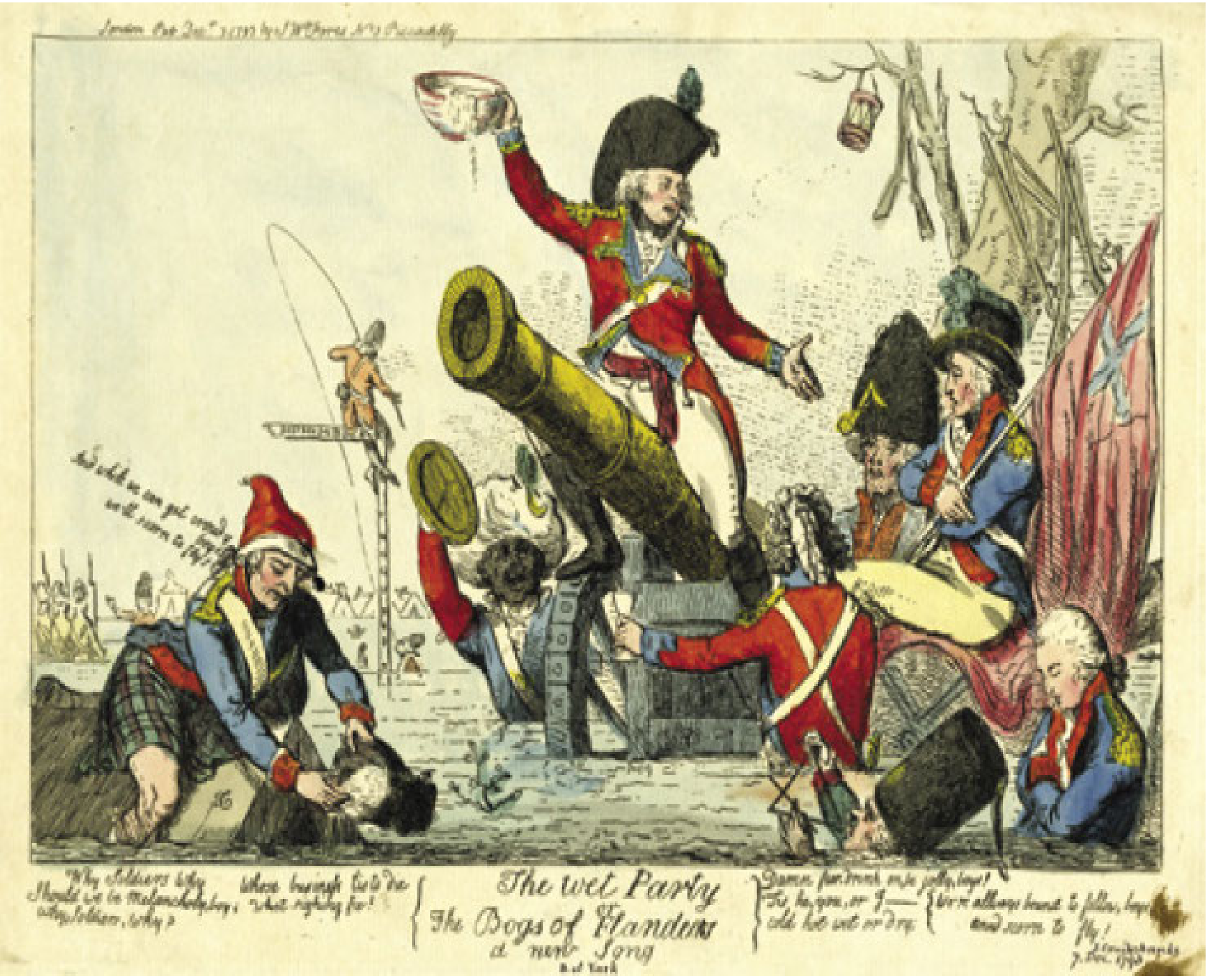


Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby KB (1734–1801); oil on canvas by John Hoppner, c. 1797. Abercromby served in 3rd Dragoon Guards 1756–62 and in the Carabiniers 1762–81, being Colonel of the Scots Greys 1796–1801. (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

In 1773 the death of the regiment's executive Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel William Napier, enabled the Major, Ralph Abercromby (1734–1801), to be promoted lieutenant-colonel, without purchase, to command the Carabiniers. Abercromby exercised executive command until

1781, when he was given the colonelcy of the 103rd Regiment of Foot (or King’s Irish Infantry) – a regiment raised in Ireland for the American War of Independence. Abercromby was one of Scotland’s most distinguished 18th-century soldiers and one of several Scots who rose to high rank during the wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. His military career had begun in 1756 when he purchased a cornetcy in the 3rd Dragoon Guards; he purchased promotion to lieutenant in that regiment in 1760 and purchased a captaincy in the Carabiniers in 1762, purchasing promotion to major in 1770. Abercromby was Colonel of the Scots Greys 1796–1801 and so one of the first senior and distinguished officers to have a connection with all three component parts of the modern regiment. He died a lieutenant-general and Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath (KB) while in command of the British army in the Mediterranean and of wounds received at the battle of Alexandria in 1801.

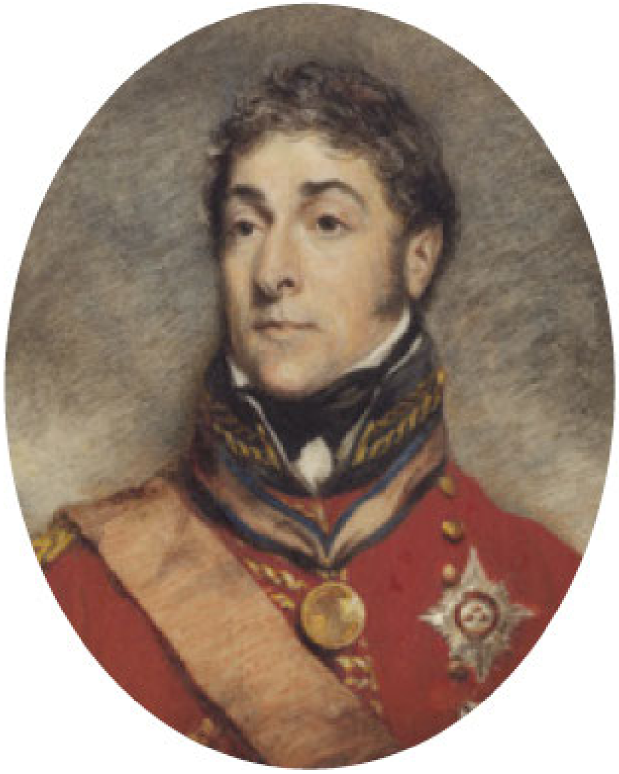
The American War of Independence resulted in the Carabiniers being slightly enlarged but, as with the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the regiment remained away from the fighting, comprising part of the forces in Ireland that were put on alert against possible invasion after France’s entry into the war in 1778. The period of the American War of Independence was characterised by politico-military activity in Ireland, as units of Volunteers were raised, ostensibly to aid the regular forces in the event of a French invasion but also with the political motive of gaining a measure of independence for the Irish parliament from the control of the British Privy Council and the Parliament at Westminster. While the Volunteers never represented a threat to the stability of Ireland, and were loud in their patriotic zeal and loyalty to the British crown, the presence of large bodies of armed men – who took little notice of orders from the regular army or Dublin Castle and who wished for a change to the status quo – necessarily represented a matter for potential concern for the troops constituting the Irish garrisons. In the event, all remained calm, no invasion took place and the Irish parliament secured a degree of independence until being dissolved at the end of the century.


Why Soldiers why
Should we be Melancholy boys,
why Soldiers, why?
whose business tis to die
what sighing for!
The wet Party
The Bogs of Flanders
a new Song
Damn fear, drink on, be jolly, boys!
Tis he, you, or I —
cold hot wet or dry
We're always bound to follow, boys
and scorn to fly!

The Wet Party or the Bogs of Flanders: a New Song, coloured etching by I. Cruickshank, published by Fores, 1793 – a satirical comment on the conditions in which soldiers campaigned in Flanders 1793–94. (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

In 1788 the four remaining regiments of horse were converted to the status of dragoons but with the title of dragoon guards. As with the experience of the 3rd Dragoon Guards in 1746, all soldiers' pay dropped in consequence, since dragoons were not 'proper' cavalry, and while officers were given a lump sum, or 'bounty', in mitigation, other ranks were given the choice of a discharge or a bounty of two guineas (about £117 today). The '3rd Horse, or Carabineers' thus became the '6th Regiment of Dragoon Guards', losing its honorific title for the next forty years and resuming its pre-1746 place as a regiment junior in precedence to 3rd Dragoon Guards. The size of the regiment, since it was still on the Irish military establishment, was specified as twenty other ranks for each of the six troops. Of these, one man in each troop was dismounted. The colonel, lieutenant-colonel and major each commanded a troop and the remaining troops were commanded by the captains; the subalterns in each troop were a lieutenant and a cornet and in the frequent absences of the colonel his troop was commanded by a junior captain called a captain-lieutenant. Each troop had a quartermaster and the permanent regimental staff was completed by an adjutant, a chaplain and a surgeon.

The regiment remained with this small establishment until 1793 when, as a result of the outbreak of war with France, its establishment was enlarged to 372 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and men. Two additional troops were formed from specially recruited soldiers of a minimum height of 5 feet 6 inches (1.68 metres); these soldiers were mounted on smaller horses than the rest of the regiment. The additional troops were intended to serve as light cavalry in the coming campaign and one of the troops was commanded by Captain Stapleton Cotton (1773–1865), who ended his long military career as Field Marshal Viscount Combermere GCB GCH. Cotton, who had begun his service in the infantry, purchased his captaincy in the regiment in February 1793 and served with the Carabiniers in Flanders before leaving in 1794, being promoted major in the infantry and then almost immediately purchasing command of the newly raised 25th Light Dragoons; he became a distinguished commander of cavalry under Wellington in the Peninsular War. Cotton recorded in his memoirs how, at the battle of Willems on 10 May 1794, the 6th took on and routed their opposite numbers, the French regiment of Carabiniers – ‘nearly four squadrons of whom we unhorsed in a few moments, leaving many dead on the field’.



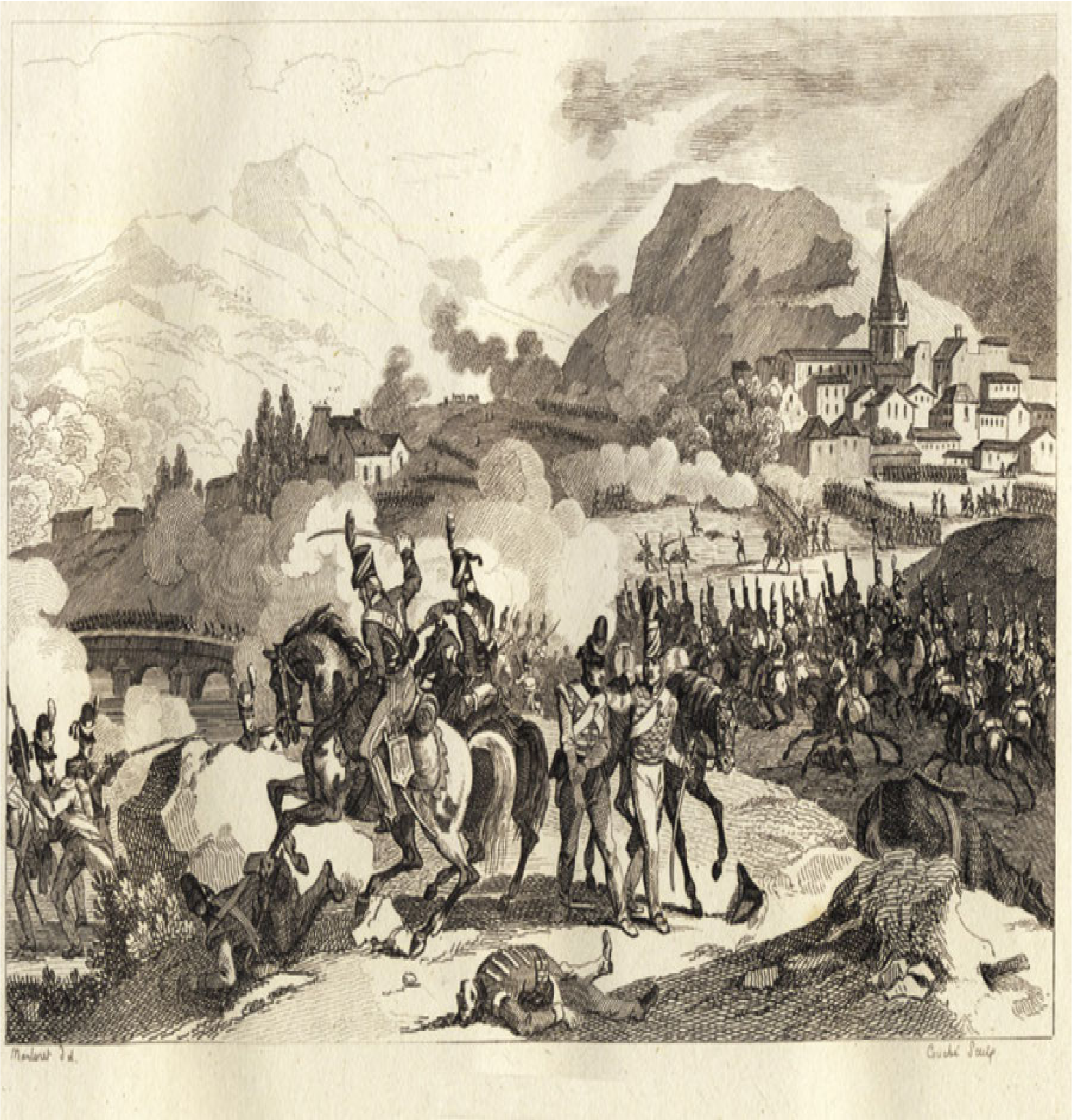
Sir Stapleton Cotton, Bt. (1773–1865) when a lieutenant-general and Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath (KB); watercolour on ivory by John Wright, c. 1812–14. (Courtesy of Philip Mould and Company/Private collection)

The Carabiniers landed at Ostend in November 1793 and, after wintering with the 3rd Dragoon Guards in Ghent, joined in the advance towards the French border in April 1794. The regiment was not engaged at the battle of Beaumont but joined the 3rd and other cavalry units to fight at Willems on 10 May 1794 before enduring one of the coldest recorded winters in quarters near Bremen; like the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the Carabiniers were awarded the battle honour ‘Willems’ in 1909. The regiment returned to England in 1796 and was involved in suppressing riots in Sheffield and the north-east of England before returning to Ireland in September 1796.

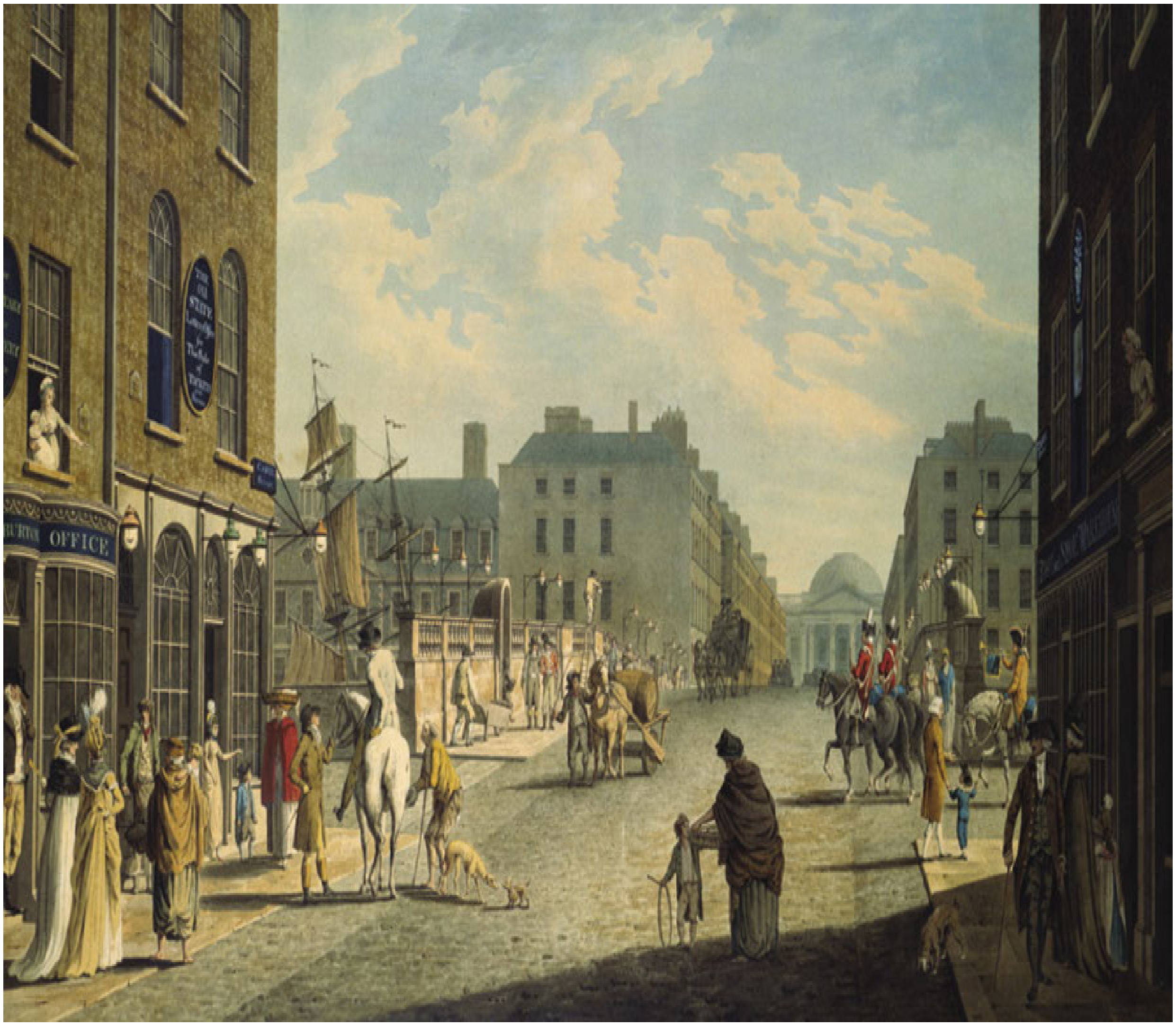
In the late 1790s Ireland was one of the few areas within the sovereignty of King George III which actually justified Westminster’s fears about the likelihood of a revolutionary uprising and, in consequence, its garrisons were strengthened. The French were, of course, well aware of the potential that Ireland had long represented as a base for an attack on Britain and so formulated a plan to invade Ireland and, with the help of the reported thousands of potentially revolutionary Irish, take over the country. The Irish rebellion, which had been smouldering for the years since the Fall of the Bastille had awoken dreams of revolution in the minds of many, finally burst into flame in May 1798. Principally involving the disenfranchised Roman Catholic population, it was pursued with varying degrees of success and savagery until being contained, with concomitant savagery, by regiments of fencibles, yeomanry and volunteer infantry and by the regular troops stationed in Ireland. A French invasion force landed on the west coast of Ireland, at Killala in County Mayo, on 23 August 1798 and advanced inland as far as Castlebar, in the same county, where it was confronted by a small British contingent consisting of a detachment from the Carabiniers, a mixed bag of fencibles and militia and eleven pieces of artillery. Although shaken by salvos from the British guns, the experienced Frenchmen undertook a bayonet charge, frightening Lieutenant George de Passow of the Carabiniers so badly that he fled the 60 miles to Athlone, taking his soldiers with him and leaving the rest of the British force to its fate. The French entrenched their position, rather than advancing to capitalise upon their success, and were persuaded to surrender in early September 1798; de Passow subsequently resigned his commission.

The remainder of the war with Revolutionary France, until the truce of 1801–03 optimistically known as the Peace of Amiens, saw the Carabiniers continuing garrison duties in Ireland. At the resumption of hostilities in 1803 the regiment moved to England and was enlarged to eight troops and a total of 640 men. The following year two further troops were added, this rapid augmentation being in direct reaction to the threat of imminent invasion from France.

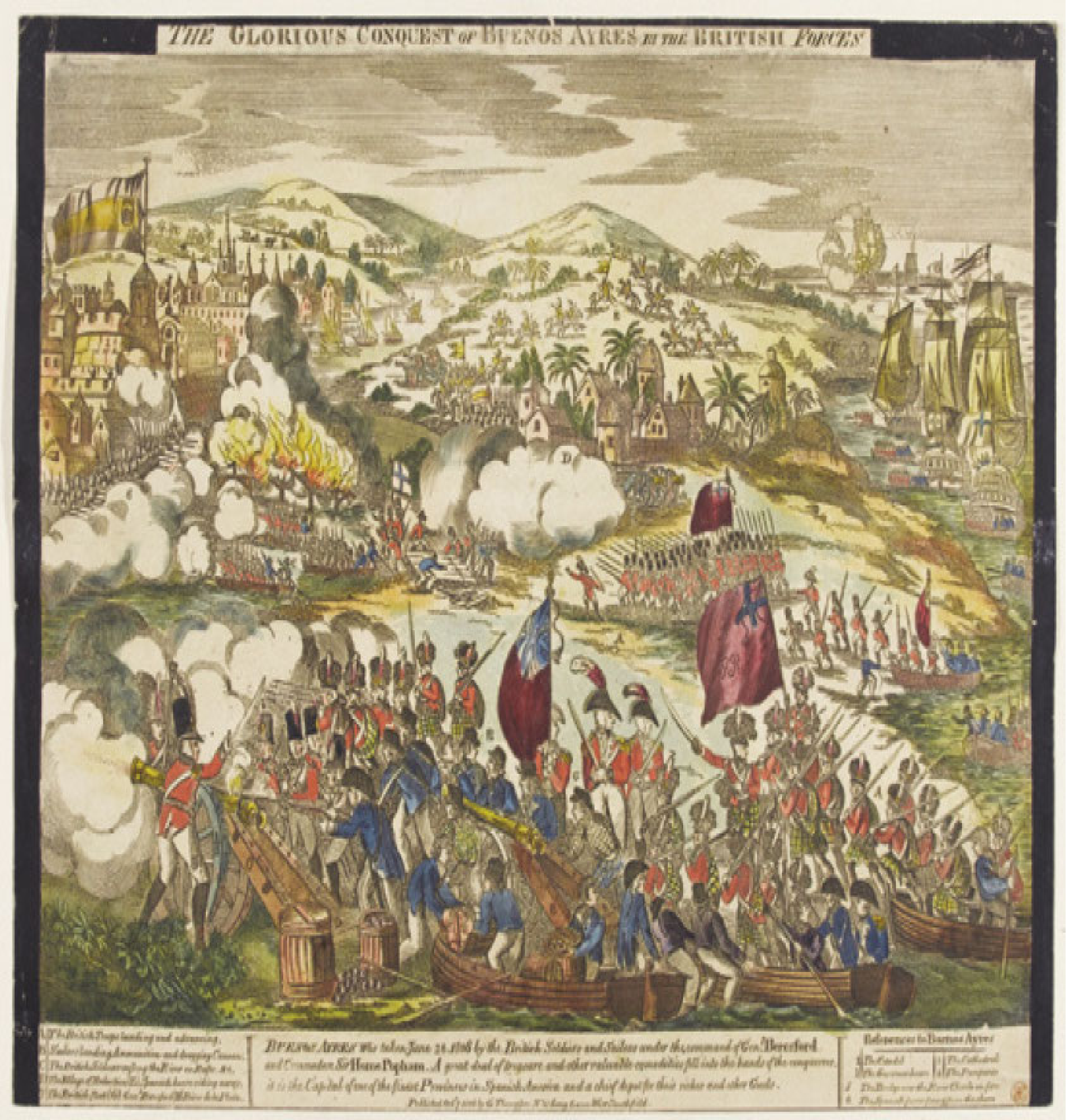
In 1807 four of the Carabiniers’ troops were sent to South America to participate in one of the least-known campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars. Spain was then at war with Britain, not having yet been completely alienated by Napoleon, and its possessions in Argentina were seen as a rich prize. A badly thought-out British expedition had been mounted from the newly captured Cape of Good Hope in 1806. It had lined its pockets with the spoils from the treasuries of Buenos Aires and Montevideo but then got into difficulties. The four troops of the Carabiniers were part of a reinforcing army sent out to relieve the first invasion force and they fought on foot during the campaign, which was a costly and dispiriting failure. Having decided, after considerable losses, not to try to retake Buenos Aires, the army fell back on Montevideo and embarked for Britain via the Cape.



Combat de Castelbar, a French view of the battle of Castlebar, 27 August 1798; engraving by L-F. Couché after P. Martinet for France Militaire, 1830. (René Chartrand)



A View of Capel Street, Dublin, with the Royal Exchange in the distance; watercolour by James Malton, c. 1790–92. An afternoon scene in late 18th-century Dublin, with the head of a column of heavy dragoons or dragoon guards emerging from Upper Ormond Quay and about to cross Essex Bridge, en route from the Royal Barracks to the Castle, behind the Royal Exchange. (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)


THE GLORIOUS CONQUEST of BUENOS AYRES by the BRITISH FORCES
BUENOS AYRES was taken June 28 1806 by the British Soldiers and Sailors under the command of Gen. Beresford and Commodore Sir Home Popham. A great deal of treasure and other valuable commodities fell into the hands of the conquerors. it is the Capital of one of the finest Provinces in Spanish America and a chief depot for their riches and other Goods.
Reference to Buenos Ayres

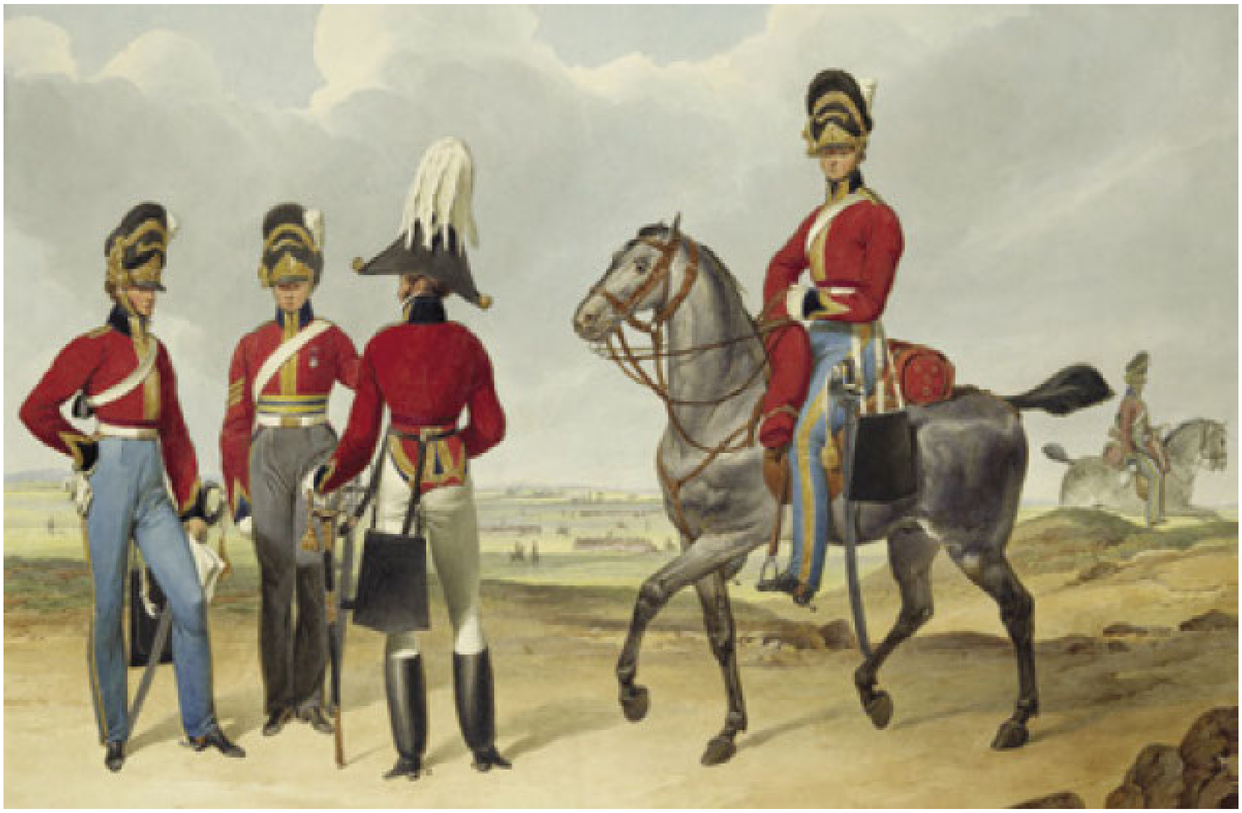
The battle of Buenos Aires, 27 June 1806; coloured woodcut published by Thompson, 1806. (National Army Museum, London/Bridgeman Images)

The Carabiniers took no part in the Peninsular War of 1808–14 but remained in garrisons throughout Britain, passing most of the period 1801–13 in Scotland, although it is recorded as being in York in 1810. In 1814 the regiment moved again to Ireland, to Dundalk, in County Louth, and then to Longford, in County Longford, and sixteen men were detached for service in the Cavalry Staff Corps under Wellington in Spain. The establishment of the regiment varied as the fortunes of the war changed and on return to Scotland from Ireland after Waterloo in July 1815 the peacetime strength was fixed at 544 officers and men.

Between 1811 and 1812, further radical changes, resulting partly from experience of active service in the Peninsula, were made to the uniform of the heavy cavalry. The looped jacket was replaced by one of Austrian style, sometimes referred to as a collett; a helmet was introduced for active service, and trousers took the place of breeches and boots for most duties. These changes established the uniforms that were worn at Waterloo.

The scarlet collett had collar, cuffs and skirts of the facing colour. It was fastened down the front by hooks and eyes. The skirts, like those of the 1796 jacket, were extremely short. Officers' colletts were edged down the fronts, around the skirts and on the cuffs with gold or silver lace 2 inches wide with a narrow stripe of facing colour down the centre, and had a row of twisted gold cord on the shoulders. An officer of the Greys noted that the cost was only 10 guineas, compared with 40 guineas for his coatee, although the latter was retained for formal dismounted occasions. Privates' jackets were edged with yellow or white lace, with a row of the same lace on the shoulder-straps. Jackets of dragoon guards had gauntlet cuffs while cuffs of dragoons were pointed. The upright

collar was cut away to show a stock and white frill. In 1815, the 3rd Dragoon Guards' facings changed from white to blue, a colour normally exclusive to royal regiments, possibly to denote the fact that the Prince of Wales had become Prince Regent in 1812.



Three officers and a sergeant, 2nd Royal North British Dragoons, 1816. The officer facing away is probably wearing a form of levee dress. Watercolour by Denis Dighton. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014)

While the Greys continued to wear the bearskin (with the addition of a 'Waterloo' scroll in 1816), the other two regiments adopted in 1812 the first of a succession of six patterns of helmets worn by dragoon guards for the next century. The 1812 pattern had a leather skull and peak, a triangular front plate bearing the cypher of King George III and an oval

tablet inscribed with the regimental title. There were five rows of fluted scales around the back of the skull, and the chinscales were of similar pattern. At the top of the helmet was a metal crest with a Medusa's head on the front, and a black horsehair mane that terminated in a tassel at the front. All metalwork was gilt for officers and brass for other ranks, regardless of the regimental lace colour. Officers continued to wear a white leather shoulder-belt and ammunition pouch, while other ranks wore the white leather carbine-belt.

For all ranks the white leather waist-belt, fastened by an oblong plate, remained in use, but the belt now supported sabretache-slings as well as sword-slings. The sabretache, used for carrying maps and writing materials, had a plain black leather flap. Officers of certain heavy cavalry regiments were wearing laced belts and Dress sabretaches with cloth flaps bearing laced and embroidered decoration before Waterloo, but no examples of such accoutrements are known for the 3rd Dragoon Guards, Carabiniers or Greys until the 1820s.

For routine duties, officers wore the waist-belt, as previously, over a crimson sash, but a girdle some 3½ inches wide was now available for more formal occasions. As sashes are traditionally in national, rather than regimental, colours, the girdle was gold with three crimson stripes for officers of all regiments irrespective of their lace colour. For some reason this rule was not enforced so rigorously for other ranks of heavy cavalry, who wore a yellow webbing girdle of similar width, striped with the colour of the facings, or of the uniform if necessary to provide a suitable contrast.

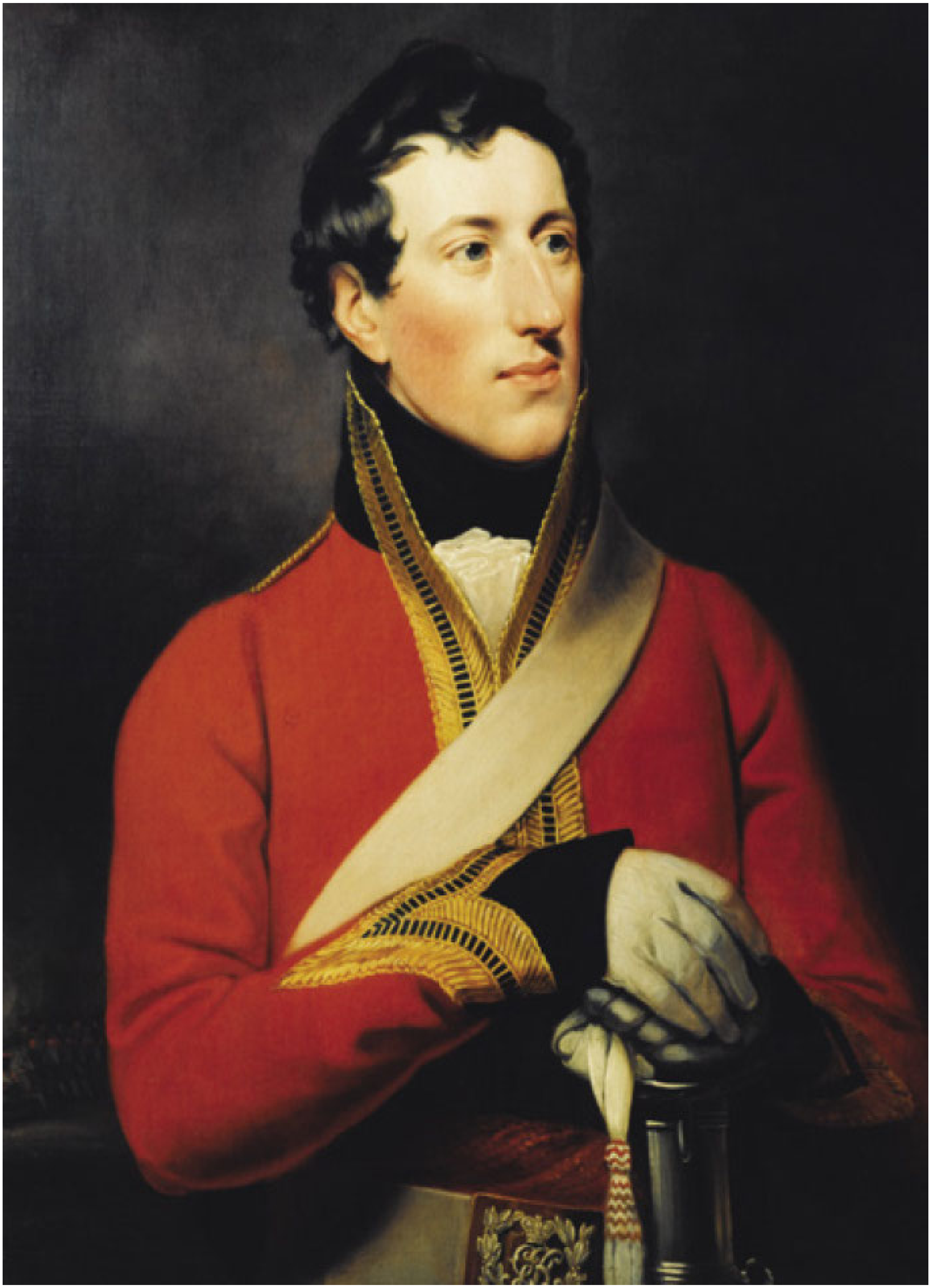
The traditional white leather or plush breeches had been found difficult to maintain on active service, and it had become normal in the Peninsula to wear trousers. Originally these were worn over the breeches and boots (hence the term 'overalls') but by the time of Waterloo they had superseded breeches in all but Review Order and were worn with ankle boots. Overalls were grey, with gold or silver stripes for officers in Dress. In Field uniform, cloth stripes were worn. These were normally scarlet but the Greys' overalls are usually depicted with double blue stripes divided by a row of buttons.

Details of Undress uniforms, particularly for other ranks, are extremely hard to come by before the mid-19th century, so James Howe's painting of the Greys in bivouac during the Waterloo campaign (see page 60) is particularly useful, as it shows troopers wearing the plain white stable jackets which had been noted in Cavalry Regulations at least as early as 1795. It is also one of the first illustrations of the vandyke band on forage caps.

An officers' Undress item which first appeared in the British army around this time was the braided blue frock coat. Originally ankle-length and described as a 'pelisse coat', it soon became knee-length and was worn intermittently by cavalry officers for the remainder of the 19th century. Coats of very similar pattern are still used by certain officers of the Household Cavalry and Foot Guards to this day.

Charles Webb

Officer’s 1812 pattern helmet, 6th Dragoon Guards 1812–17.



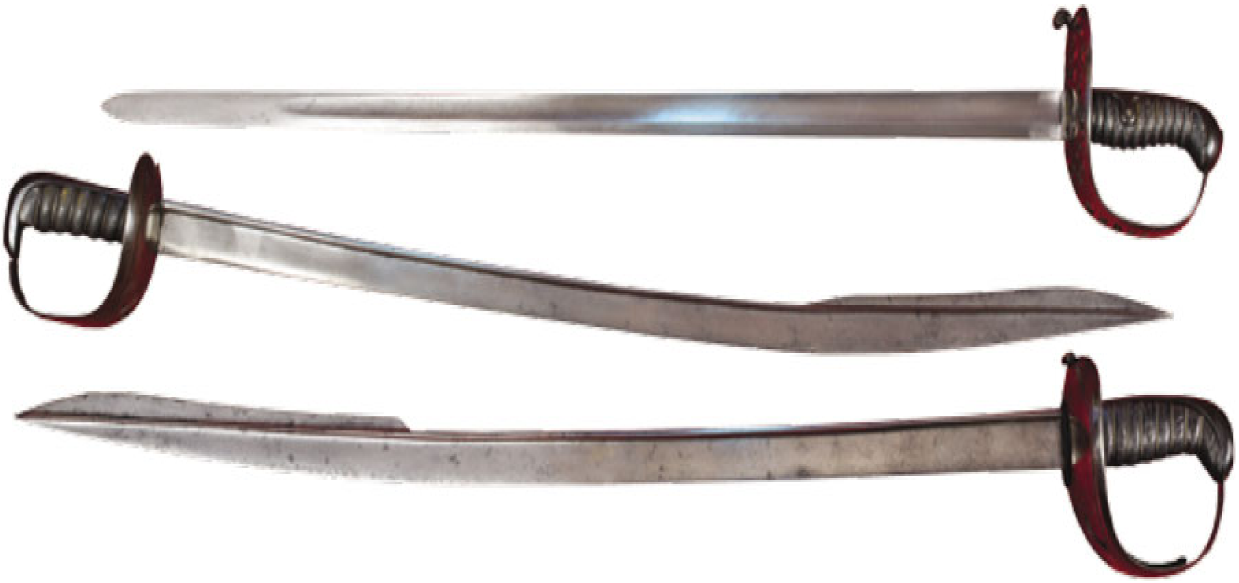
Captain Henry Gee Barnard, 2nd Dragoons, 1813; attributed to William Owen RA. (© National Museums Scotland)

In around 1813 some heavy cavalry officers began carrying a particular type of non-regulation Undress sword. This has become known to students of British military swords as the ‘Celtic hilt’ sword, the pierced style of its iron guard being likened to ancient Celtic motifs.

These swords have distinctive blades: slightly curved, ‘pipe-backed’ and with an 11–12-inch ‘chamfre-point’. This blade first appeared in the ‘Celtic hilt’ sword, its invention claimed by the London cutler John Prosser (c. 1769–1837); it was also used later in other British naval and military swords. The blade’s rigid ‘pipe-back’ and ‘chamfre-point’ indicate that it was intended to kill or disable an opponent through thrusting and not cutting. The semi-solid guard gave greater protection to the hand than that of the regulation sword and it was sufficiently robust to serve as an armoured fist in close-quarter fighting. The ‘Celtic hilt’ sword was more suitable for active service against experienced French cavalry than was the regulation heavy cavalry officers’ Undress sword; it was probably developed as a result of British cavalry officers’ empirical battlefield experiences in the latter years of the Peninsular War in Spain in c. 1813–14.

Five examples of this sword have proven regimental connections, four of them with the 4th (or Queen’s Own) Dragoons; because of this, the

‘Celtic hilt’ sword is believed to be more associated with the 4th Dragoons than with any other regiment. The fifth sword is known to have originally belonged to Major James Hadden, who served with the 3rd (or Prince of Wales’s) Dragoon Guards 1813–33: it bears Hadden’s crest and initials on its blade and is now in the regimental museum in Edinburgh.



Swords belonging to, from top, Captain Francis Stupart (regulation pattern), Captain Thomas Fenton (Celtic hilt) and Major James Hadden (Celtic hilt).

The 3rd Dragoon Guards sailed to Portugal in April 1809 on the same ships as the 4th Dragoons. The two regiments were brigaded together for the following five years and their officers would have met regularly, both socially and in action: both regiments were frequently in combat between 1809 and 1814. As a result of the experiences of hand-to-hand fighting with French cavalry, the officers of both regiments would undoubtedly have discussed and compared the qualities of their fighting swords with those of the French – who were taught to favour the thrust over the cut. It is probable that when Hadden – who had seen no active

military service hitherto – joined the 3rd Dragoon Guards as a lieutenant in 1813 he obtained the type of sword then popular as a 'service' sword within his regiment's brigade and particularly with the officers of the 4th Dragoons.

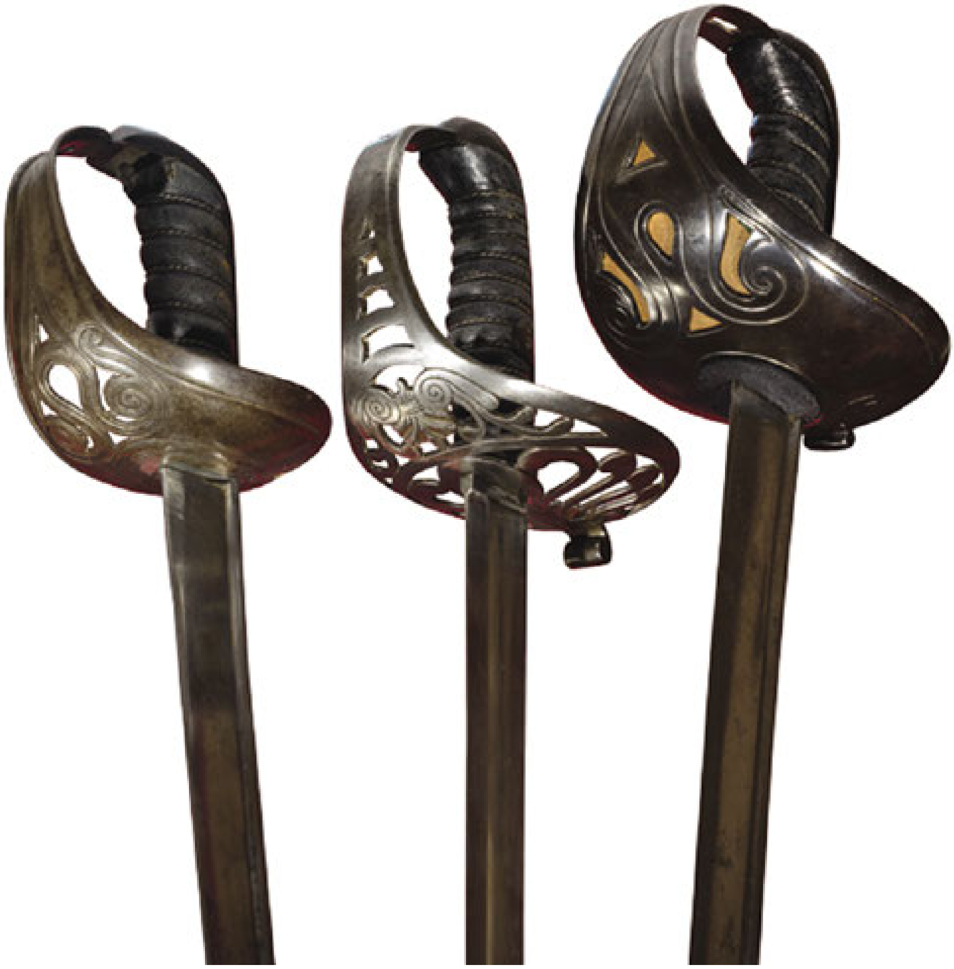
Part of the connection between this sword and the Royal Scots Greys is made through Captain Thomas Charles Fenton. Fenton served with the 4th Dragoons in the Peninsula from 1809, experiencing action at the battles of Talavera, Busaco, Albuhera, Salamanca, Vittoria and Toulouse and, following a brief period on half pay 1814–15, exchanged into the 2nd (or Royal North British) Dragoons on 6 April 1815. He fought with the Greys at Waterloo, being one of seven officers of the regiment present at that battle who had seen active service hitherto and one of the few to escape that battle unwounded. It is probable that he brought with him into the regiment the 'Celtic hilt' sword that he had carried in action in the Peninsula; that sword is now in the regimental museum. Whether this type of sword became, between c. 1815 and 1821, a Scots Greys 'regimental pattern' is conjectural. Other Greys officers' Undress swords of that period – notably that of Captain Francis Stupart, probably carried at Waterloo and now in the regimental museum – which are of the regulation pattern indicate that not all Greys officers followed Fenton's lead by acquiring a 'Celtic hilt' sword, or at least had not done so by June 1815.

Two paintings by Denis Dighton (1791–1827), military draughtsman to the Prince Regent and a painter noted for his detailed and accurate portrayal of military dress and accoutrements, are of relevance as they suggest that some officers of the Greys had adopted 'Celtic hilt' swords for Undress by 1816. In the painting of the regiment at Waterloo (see pages 34–5), exhibited in 1817, an officer is shown in the right middle distance wielding a sword that certainly has a slightly curved blade and may have a 'pipe-back' and a 'chamfre-point'. In the other picture, painted in 1816 (see page 54), two officers of the regiment are depicted wearing bowl-hilted swords with slightly curved blades; although the distinctive 'Celtic' piercings are not evident in those swords' hilts, they are not the regulation Undress sword of the period.

It is thus probable that some officers of the 2nd (or Royal North British) Dragoons carried a 'Celtic hilt' sword in Undress between c. 1816 and 1821;

in the latter year a new pattern of Undress sword was introduced for heavy cavalry officers.

Richard Dellar and Stephen Wood



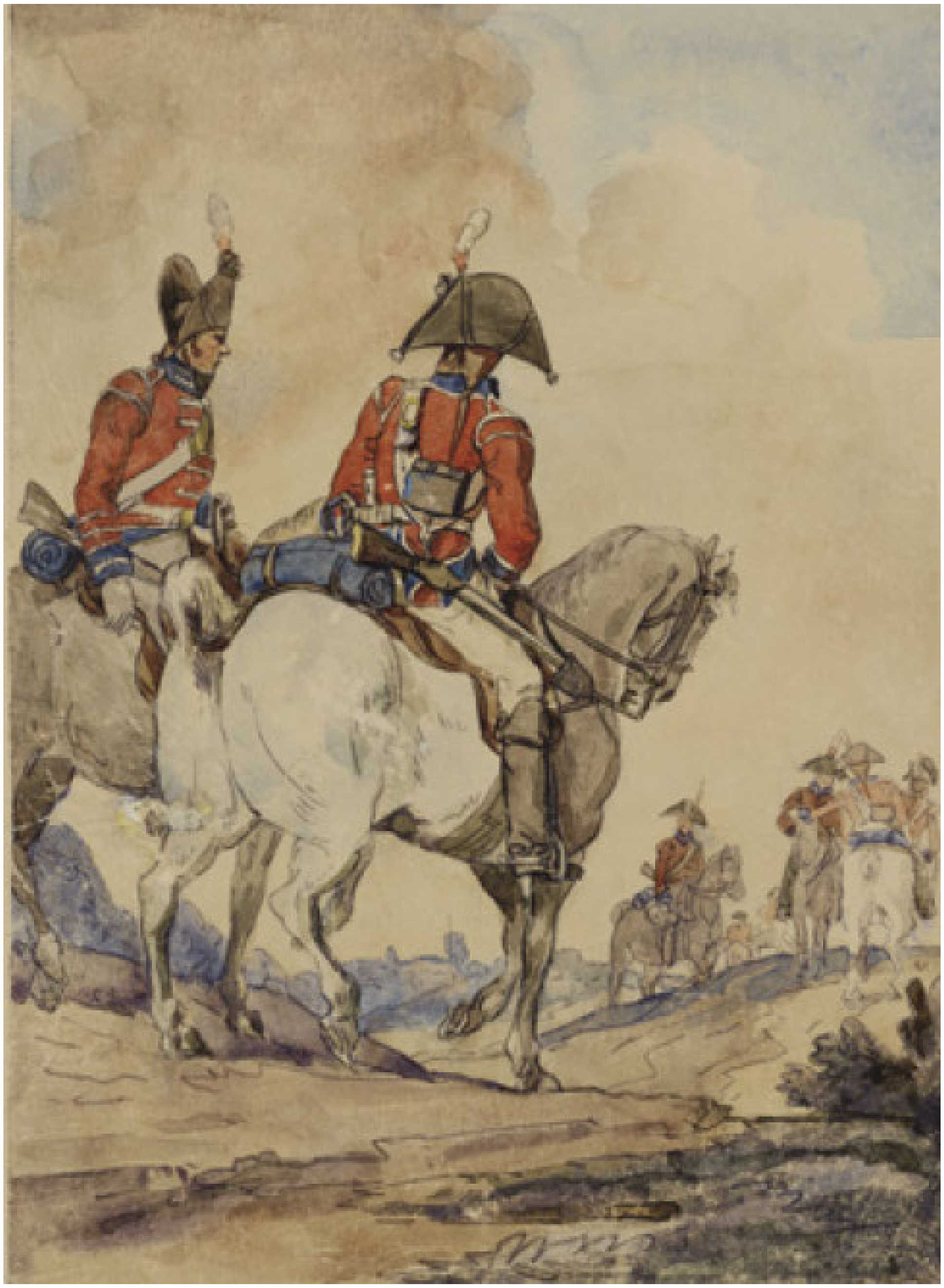
The hilts of officers’ swords belonging to, from left, Captain Fenton, Captain Stupart and Major Hadden.

ROYAL SCOTS GREYS

After its return home in 1763, the regiment stayed in Scotland less than a year and from 1764 until 1769 was stationed in various parts of England, returning to Scotland in 1769. While in the city of Worcester in November 1765, the regiment was reviewed by Major General John Parslow. The local newspaper, Berrow's Worcester Journal , recorded that on that occasion the regiment 'made a most grand Appearance and gave great Satisfaction in their Exercise and Evolutions. After the Review, the General entertained all the Officers of the Regiment with a very elegant Dinner at the Bell Inn.' The Greys returned to England in 1770 and were posted about the country on a number of different duties until 1776 when, again briefly, Scotland became the regimental base. Returning to England in 1777, the regiment remained there until 1782 before spending another year, 1783, in Scotland. In common with all other regiments, recruiting was not at this time restricted to specific areas and it is believed that the regiment was, as a matter of policy, willing to include non-Scots in its ranks, assuming of course that the recruits were of the required standard. In common with other cavalry regiments, the regiment's duties were primarily those of mounted policemen at a time when no other form of nationally organised police force existed.

In 1768 the regiment was ordered to change its embroidered cloth 'mitre' caps for caps whose bodies were covered with black bearskin – as were the new 'mitre' caps ordered in that year for all other grenadiers in the army; the Greys successfully resisted this innovation until 1777–78. The fur cap, predecessor of the modern bearskin cap, was traditionally associated with grenadiers (elite troops) among the infantry and the Greys appears to have been the only cavalry of the line to have been allowed to wear such a headdress – the 5th Dragoons having ceased to wear its grenadier caps in 1768. The adoption of the tall cap and the eventual use of the flaming grenade as a badge both indicate that the regiment was regarded as an elite regiment from a very early period.

In 1778 the regiment's strength was increased and a troop of ninety-six NCOs and men ordered to be dressed, equipped and trained as light cavalry. In the following year these soldiers, together with others similarly trained from three other dragoon and two other light dragoon regiments, were separated from their parent regiments and formed into a separate regiment of light cavalry, the 21st (Light) Dragoons, a regiment that was disbanded in 1783. The Colonel of the 21st, John Douglas, was a Scot who had joined the Greys as a cornet in 1744 and served his entire regimental career with the regiment, leaving as the Commanding Officer in 1779 to be promoted major general and to raise the new regiment of light dragoons. Douglas took as his Lieutenant-Colonel Major Philip de la Motte from the 3rd Dragoon Guards and added two officers from the Greys to his new regiment's commissioned ranks: Lieutenant Sir James St Clair Erskine, Bt. and Cornet John Fullerton.

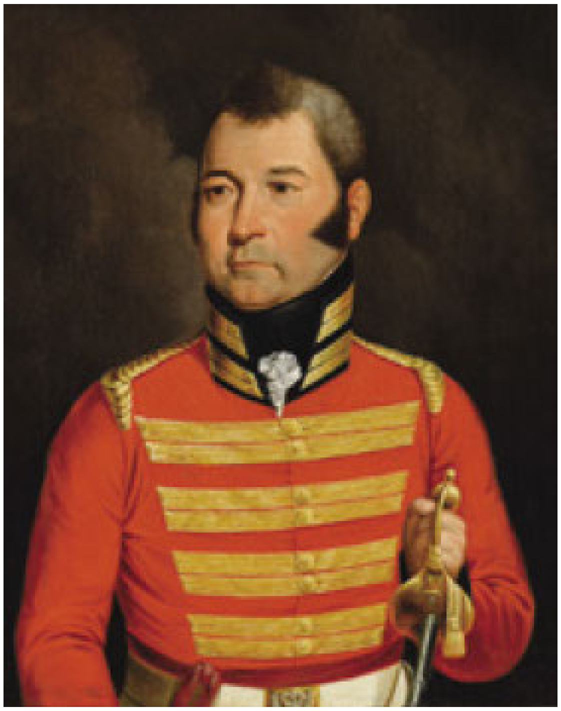


Privates of 2nd Dragoons; coloured aquatint by J. Hill after J. A. Atkinson, published by Miller, 1808. (© National Museums Scotland)

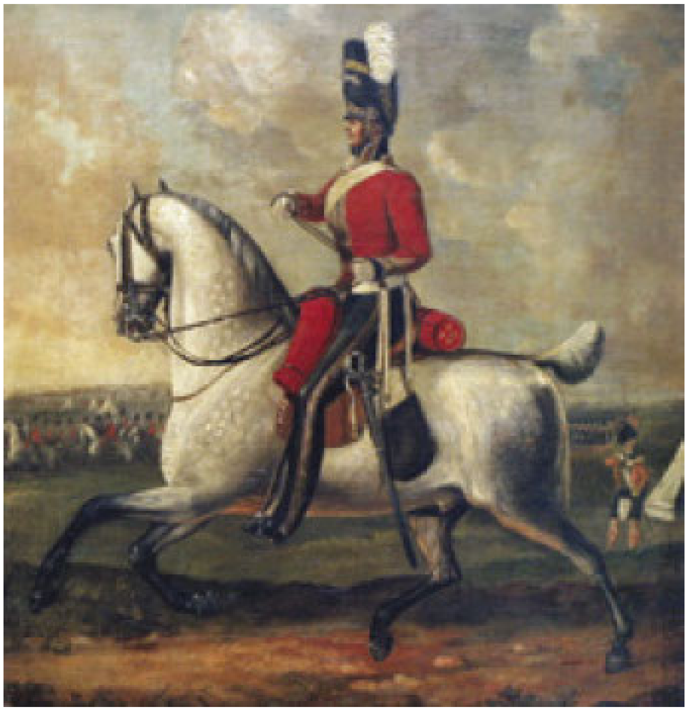
The Greys returned from Scotland in 1784 and more postings around England followed, the outbreak of war with Revolutionary France in 1793 finding the regiment in Lancashire. In July 1793 four of the regiment's nine troops landed at Ostend while the five remaining troops were increased to eighty men each. After wintering in Ghent, the army, including the four Greys troops, began campaigning again in April 1794. At the battle of Willems in May 1794 the four troops of the regiment were in the forefront of the action when the British cavalry charged into and broke several squares of French infantry; leading the attack on one of the broken squares was an officer of the Greys whose name, regrettably, has not been recorded. To break an infantry square by means other than concentrated artillery fire was almost unheard of and involved, in this case, the officer jumping his horse over two or three ranks of soldiers – equipped with muskets with fixed bayonets – surviving the experience and then making a gap large enough for his soldiers to get in and hack, thrust, chop and slice around them. Nothing similar would happen again until the latter years of the Napoleonic Wars. As with the 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards, the regiment received the battle honour 'Willems' in 1909.

The Greys' detachment returned to Britain in 1795 and remained in England on garrison duties, and as potential resisters of invasion, until 1807. A detachment of the regiment was present at the funeral of Lord Nelson in 1806 and the regiment's establishment fluctuated as the chances of action advanced or receded.

The Greys took no part in the Peninsular War but were stationed in Scotland for eighteen months from January 1807 and in Ireland from late 1808 until 1810. Although the war affected the civilian population far less than did the two world wars of the 20th century, the war years were a time of considerable privation for the poor, of high taxes, of conscription-by-ballot to the militia, impressment from the local militia to the regular army, press-ganging into the Royal Navy and of a growing feeling of resentment in the new industrialised towns in the north and Midlands of England at the way in which they were largely unrepresented in Parliament. Thus, although the Greys remained at home, there was sufficient civilian unrest to make their presence, and that of other regiments similarly stationed, necessary for the maintenance of what passed at the time for law and order. Service in the militia became compulsory after 1802 and was very unpopular indeed, principally because it often led to drafting into regular infantry regiments fighting overseas but also because it involved service away from home and family. The concept of a population patriotically united behind a wartime government did not consistently apply in the Britain of the Napoleonic Wars and the use of soldiers to enforce unpopular laws was commonplace. No records of the Greys having to drag civilians from their houses and into barracks exist but it is likely that all regiments stationed in Britain at the time had unpopular duties to perform. The Greys were stationed in various parts of England from 1811 until the spring of 1815.



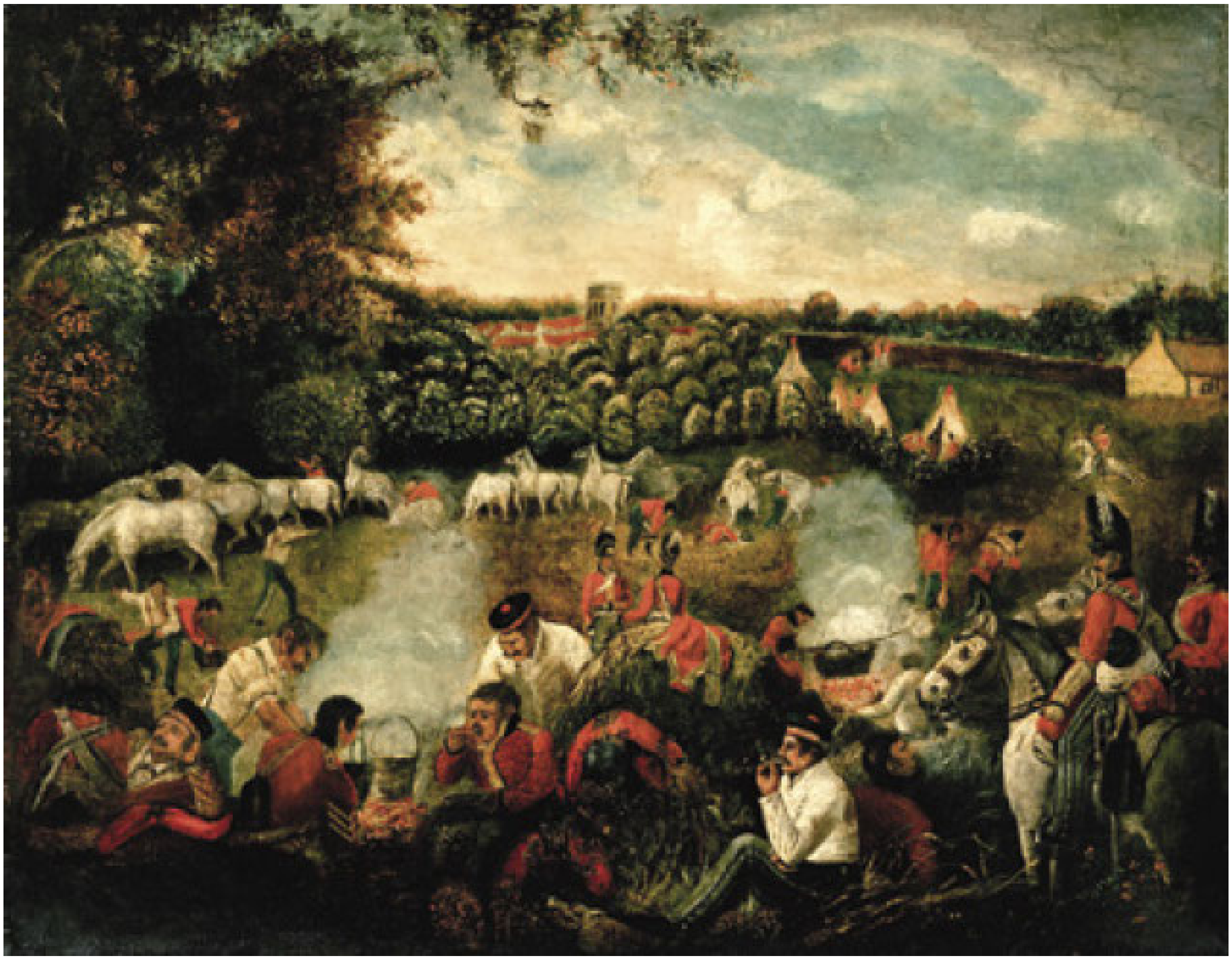
Lieutenant John Stobo, 2nd Dragoons, c. 1810; oil on canvas, artist unknown. Having been regimental quartermaster, Stobo was appointed Adjutant and then commissioned cornet in 1800, being promoted lieutenant in 1803; he was placed on half pay in 1816.



An officer of 2nd Dragoons, c. 1815–16; oil on canvas, artist unknown.

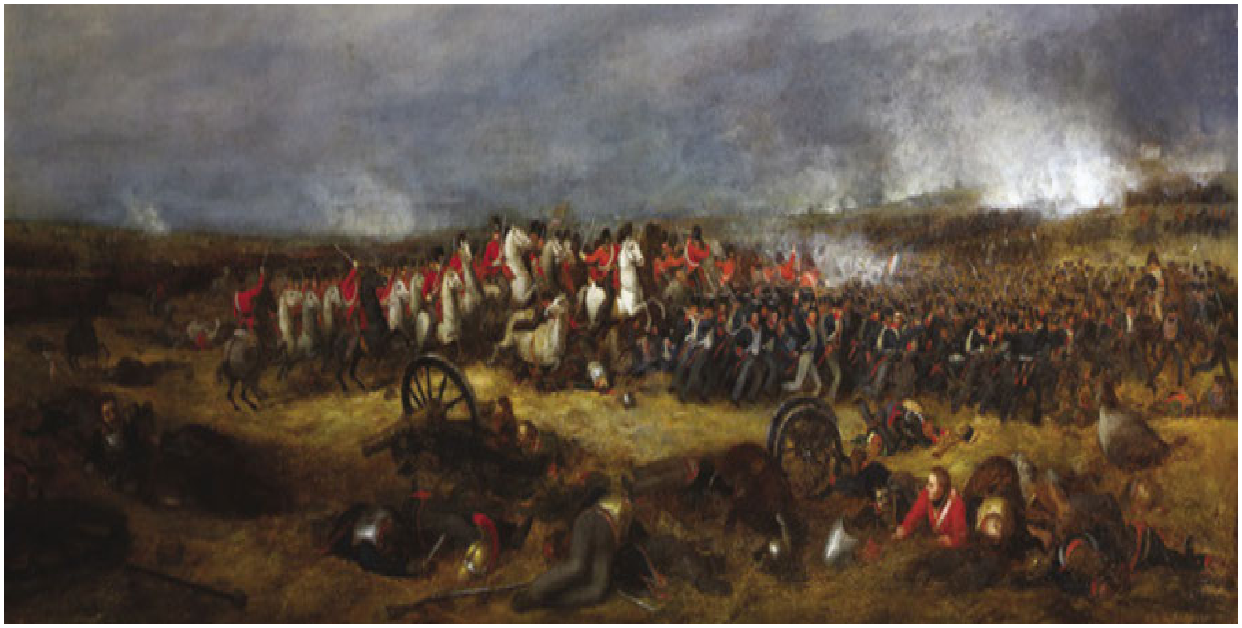
When Napoleon escaped from Elba in 1815 and threatened again to disrupt the peace of Europe, the regiment's strength was doubled to nearly 1,000 officers and men and six of the ten troops were put in a state of readiness for immediate embarkation. The order to move was received on 6 April and the six troops of the regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel James Inglis Hamilton, arrived in Ostend on 19 April, having moved from Bristol to Gravesend in seven days. Of those officers who embarked, only seven had previously seen active service. Major Isaac Clarke and Captain Edward Cheney had served with the regiment in Flanders 1793–95; the other five officers – Captains Charles Barnard and Thomas Fenton and Lieutenants Archibald Hamilton, Thomas Trotter and Charles Wyndham – had all served in other regiments in the Peninsular campaign (Barnard and Trotter were both to be killed at Waterloo). The Greys were brigaded with the two other regiments of dragoons, the 1st (Royals) – now part of the Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons) – and the 6th (Inniskilling), now part of the Royal Dragoon Guards. The title given to the brigade was the

Union Brigade, reflecting the link between England (the Royals), Scotland (the Greys) and Ireland (the Inniskillings). The strength of the Union Brigade was a little over 1,100 men and command was given to Major General The Honourable Sir William Ponsonby KCB.



Scots Greys in bivouac before Waterloo; oil on canvas by James Howe, c. 1815. (© National Museums Scotland)

Much of the rest of April and the whole of May 1815 were spent in quarters of changing location and varying quality, while Wellington attempted to discover what Napoleon’s intentions were. The imminence of an attack from France, in the form of an eastward thrust, was not in question, but its direction and strength were, and little could be planned or achieved until some indication of the position, force and plans of the French army was ascertained. The first British blood was shed on 16 June at Quatre Bras, near a crossroads south of Genappe in what is now the Belgian province of Wallonia, and Napoleon's route became obvious: a thrust at Brussels to end matters quickly and to drive the Allied armies back into the sea. The Greys were called forward to Quatre Bras but arrived after the action and bivouacked in the fields. Retreat northwards in the direction of Brussels in the face of powerful French forces followed for the next couple of days until, in appalling weather, the British army made camp south of Waterloo, the terrain of which Wellington had reconnoitred on an earlier visit to the area.



The Charge of the Greys at Waterloo (detail); oil on canvas by William Findlater, c. 1815–17.

The battle that followed, on 18 June 1815, established the course of European history for a century and was of such importance to the growth of British power that it rapidly took on the status of a semi-mythical event. For the Greys it was a slaughter, a baptism of fire after two decades of relative peace, the event that made the regiment a household name and the battle at which the regiment captured its most treasured and revered possession. There are almost as many accounts of the battle as there were participants in it and debate about all the battle's aspects continues to rage.

Wellington had developed a low regard for the British cavalry since it had, as he put it, got him into several 'scrapes' in the Peninsular campaign by its tendency to charge off hither and yon and become ungovernable after achieving its object of smashing, demoralising and sabreing the enemy. As an experienced rider to hounds, Wellington knew only too well how the exhilaration afforded by a mad thrash across country could easily overwhelm the better judgment of even the most staid of his cavalry commanders, the staid ones being a rarity, so he tended to use his cavalry when it could only do good and not get itself into mischief. Waterloo, though, was not a Peninsular battle; there were no fortified positions – no Lines of Torres Vedras – to retreat to in good order. Wellington knew that, with the sea at his back, this was a battle on which he had to gamble everything and risk losing all: he could not afford to lose. Fortunately, he had battle-hardened troops from the Peninsula, who had faced the French before and become used to thrashing them, and eager fresh troops from home, anxious to prove themselves and to get a slice of the action before it was too late. He was also facing an ill-formed army that was overstretched and undersupplied, staking everything on a last extravagant throw of the dice. Wellington also had the Prussians and knew that they would come to his aid; what he did not know was when that would happen.

A pair of decanters and a water jug in cut lead glass; each item bears a silver plaque engraved, 'In use by Colonel I B Clarke & the Officers of the Greys on June 18th 1815 and presented to the Regt. by his grandson, Captain W Fisher RN'.

The Greys went into the battle numbering 391 of all ranks; by the evening 102 of them were dead and 98 were wounded. Formed up, dismounted but in readiness to mount, on the reverse slope of the ridge (in order to be invisible to the greater part of the French army), the regiment had had to wait for several hours after the opening moves of the battle had been made. In front of the Union Brigade were the battalions of British infantry of the 9th Brigade within the 5th Division; the battalions within this brigade were facing down the slope towards the masses of French infantry, advancing in columns across the valley and up the slope towards them. The brigade was ordered to open fire and did so with great effect, successive rolling volleys of musket balls tearing bloody swathes through the closely packed advancing French soldiers. Volley after volley shook and staggered the French columns, yet they kept coming, so the Union and Household Brigades were ordered to mount and to move forward to lend their weight to the argument. The effect of these regiments of heavy cavalry suddenly appearing over the crest of the ridge and then charging down the slope and full tilt into the massed ranks of the French can be imagined. The two French divisions commanded by Donzelot and Marcognet, within the 1st Infantry Corps of the French Armée du Nord commanded by General Jean-Baptiste Drouet, Comte d'Erlon, were cut to pieces or trampled by the wielded steel and thundering horseflesh of the Union Brigade and the Household Brigade (Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards). Two French standards, only recently given to the 45th and 105th Regiments of Infantry by the newly returned Emperor, and topped with their glittering gilded eagles, were taken by the Greys and the Royals.

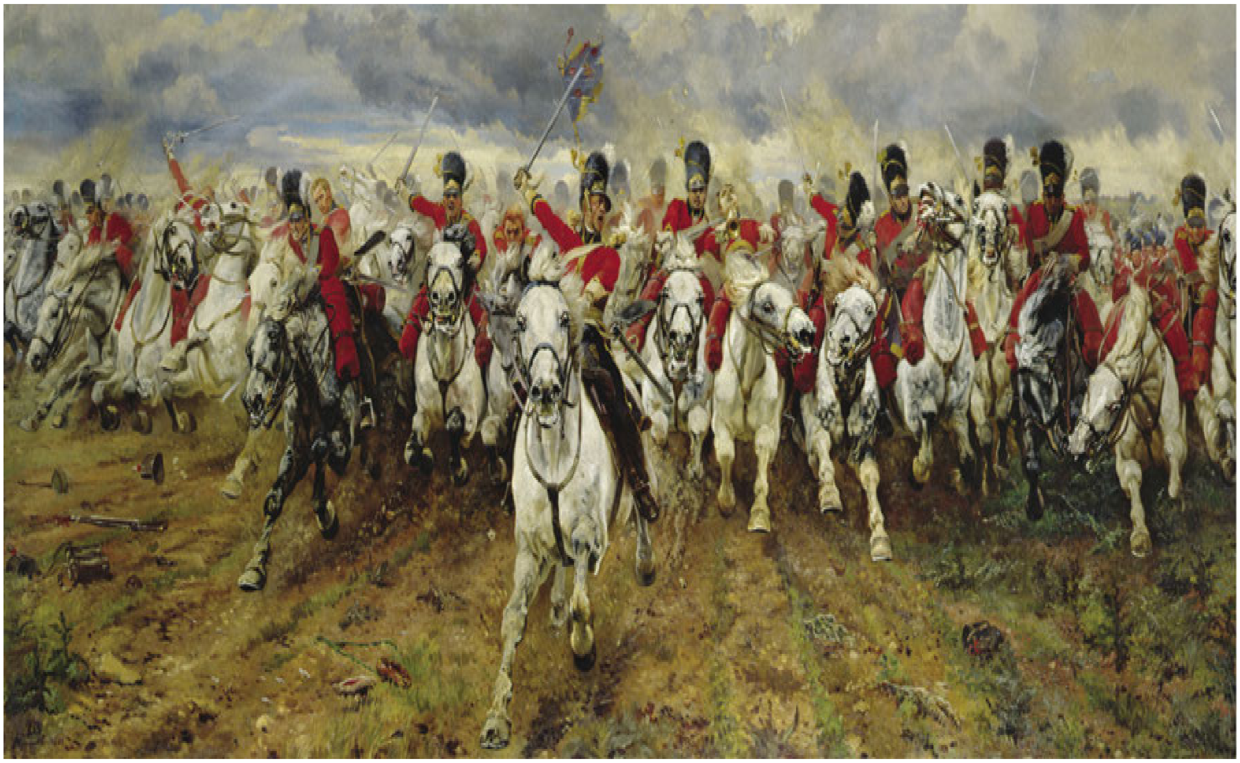
The saddle and valise used by Lieutenant James Gape at Waterloo. Gape joined the regiment as a cornet in 1813, was promoted lieutenant in May 1815 and retired as a captain in 1833; he was narrowly missed at Waterloo by two musket balls that lodged in his saddle.

Scotland for Ever! is the best-known image depicting the regiment and is one of the most famous military paintings in the Western world. Painted in 1881, it was purchased by Colonel T. Walter Harding, who presented it to the newly established City of Leeds Art Gallery, where it still hangs. The original is signed with Lady Butler's monogram, 'EB', and dated Plymouth 1881, nearly seventy years after the battle of Waterloo. The painting in the Officers' Mess is smaller and probably a copy made for the regiment; it is signed 'E. Butler'.

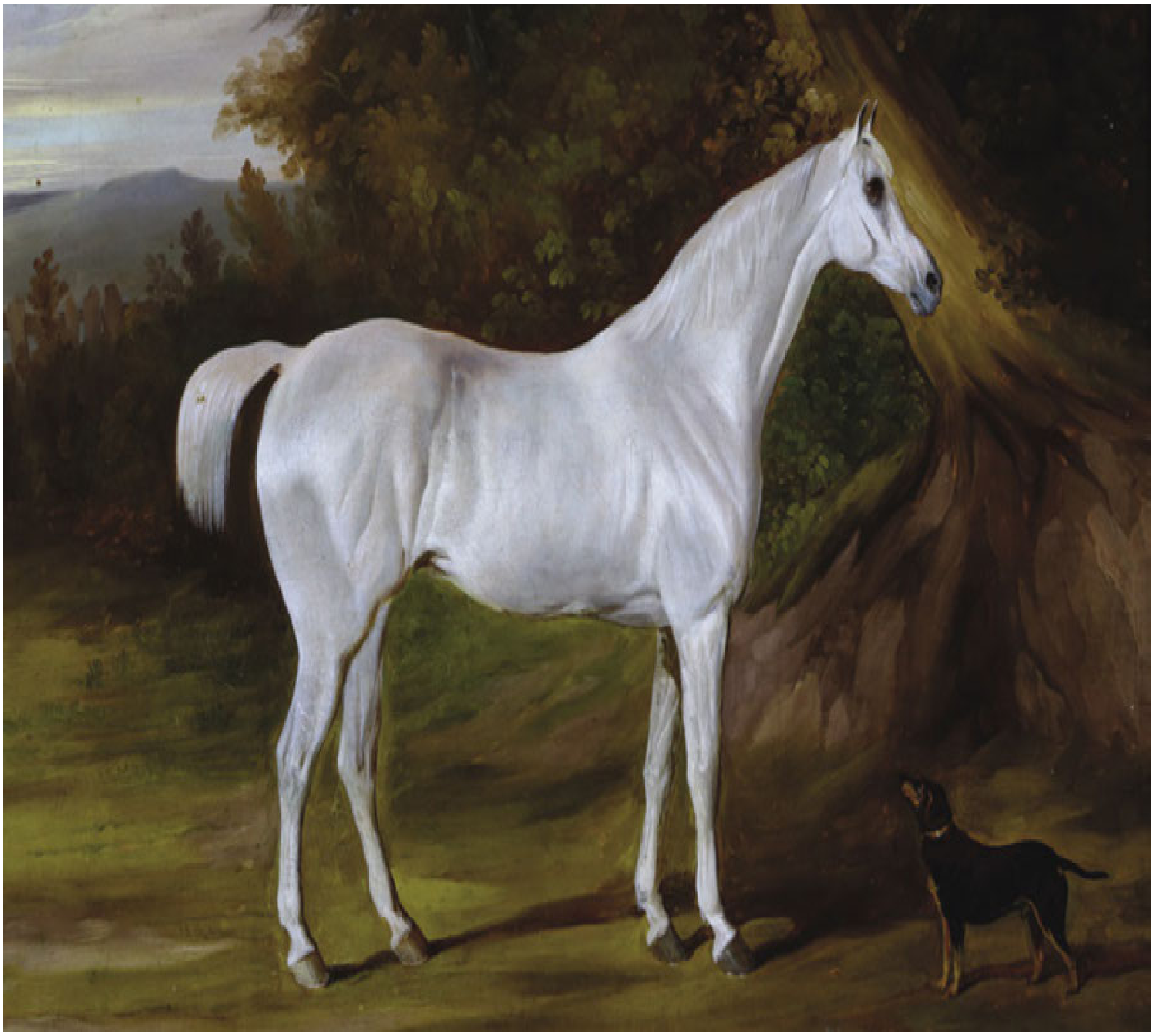
Lady Butler was born Elizabeth Southerden Thompson in Lausanne in 1846. Much of her early life was spent in France (where she was influenced by the French military artists of the Franco-Prussian War). She studied in Florence and Rome before returning to England to study at the Female School of Art in South Kensington.

In 1874 she submitted The Roll Call (the Grenadier Guards after the battle of Inkermann) to the Royal Academy. It was an immediate sensation with both the selection committee and the general public. Queen Victoria bought the painting and by 1875 Elizabeth Thompson was one of the most popular artists in the country. In 1877 she married Major (later General Sir) William Butler, giving her even greater access to the military, and travelled with him to Egypt and to the Cape.

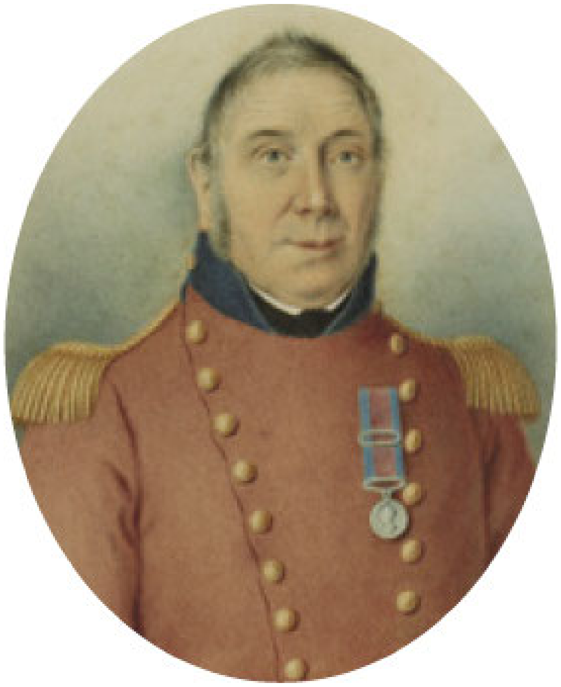
Bruce Ridge



Scotland for Ever! (detail). (Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery) UK / Bridgeman Images)



'Nelly' a Scots Grey of Waterloo: the fourth mount of the adjutant that day; oil on canvas by David Dalby, 1830. The regiment's adjutant at Waterloo was Lieutenant Henry McMillan, who had been appointed to the post in 1802 – taking over from John Stobo – and promoted lieutenant in 1805; he was promoted captain in 1815 and was placed on half pay in 1816.



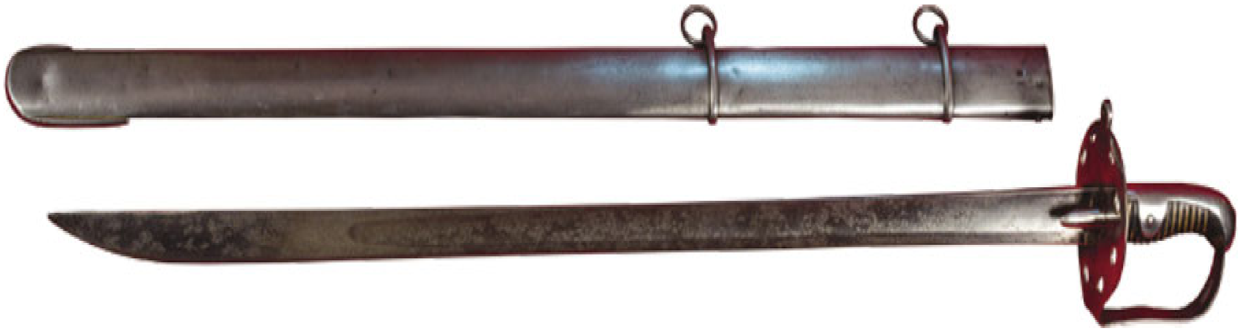
Ensign Charles Ewart, 5th Royal Veteran Battalion; watercolour by Richard Bowman, c. 1844. (© Manchester City Galleries)

Sergeant Charles Ewart, a soldier who had seen action with the regiment in Flanders in the 1790s, relieved the 45th Infantry of its rallying point early in the engagement and cut down two French soldiers as well as the standard-bearer in order to keep his prize, which he was ordered to take to the rear before rejoining the regiment.

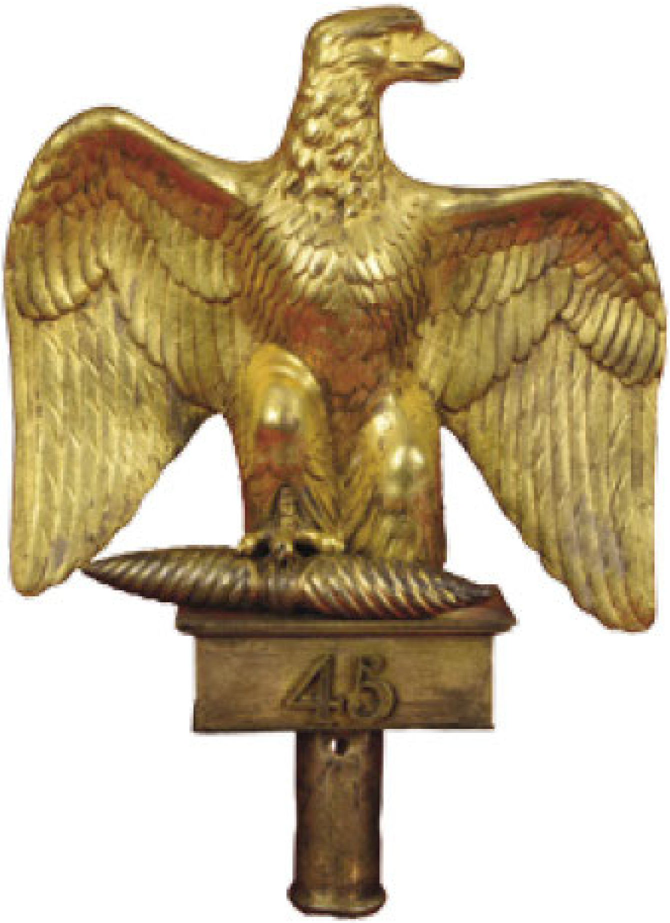
He had already killed a French officer by the time he cut down the standard-bearer of the 45th. This Frenchman, who had apparently surrendered and given up his sword at the beginning of the action, had had his life spared by Ewart at the request of Cornet Francis Kinchant of the Greys but had then, when Ewart's back was turned, shot Kinchant dead with a pistol concealed in his coat. Hearing the shot and seeing his officer fall, Ewart promptly decapitated the Frenchman. In later years Ewart referred to his capture of the 45th's eagle only rarely, and always with unfailing modesty, giving the impression that he was far prouder of the summary justice dealt to a treacherous enemy.

Ewart was of above average height and strength, at a period when strength with the cavalry sword was more important than grace or skill, and was adept at handling an ugly, badly balanced, poor-quality weapon which was little-suited for thrusting and scarcely better at cutting; that he managed to deploy it with such frequent and terminal effect speaks more for the great strength of his arms, shoulders and back than for the efficiency of his weapon.

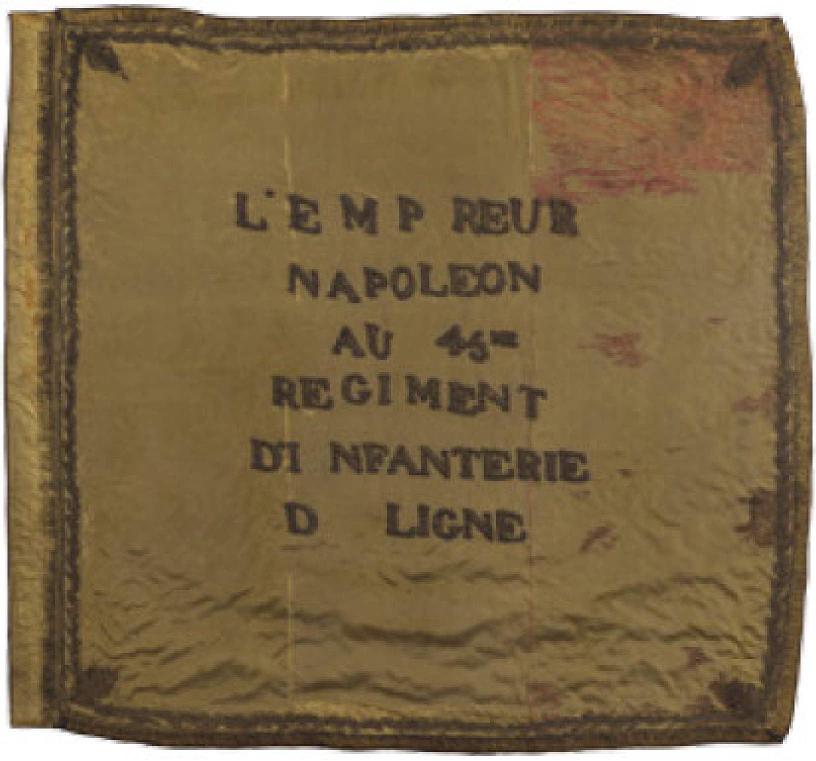
Ewart's move to the rear with his captured standard and eagle may well have saved his life and preserved the trophy for the regiment. As he was trotting reluctantly to the rear – having been ordered to do so by the brigade commander – the officers and men of the Greys swept onward into the valley, cutting, slashing and cheering, and up the facing slope through a field battery of French cannon – whose gunners were given short shrift – far further than was wise. As a result, the horses became blown and the regiment was unable to rally, escape quickly or properly defend itself when it was fallen upon by the 6th and 9th Cuirassiers of Farine's cavalry brigade. Attempting to return through the now largely disabled guns of the French artillery, the regiment was attacked in the flank by the 4th Lancers and seriously cut up. Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, commanding the regiment, was wounded in both arms and attempted to lead the Greys out of the action while holding his horse's reins in his teeth; he was soon shot dead.



The other ranks' 1796 pattern heavy cavalry sword and scabbard believed to have been carried by Sergeant Ewart at Waterloo.



The eagle from the top of the flagstaff of the French 45th Regiment of Infantry of the Line, taken by Sergeant Ewart at Waterloo.


L'EMP REUR
NAPOLEON
AU 45^me
REGIMENT
D'I NFANTERIE
D LIGNE

The standard of the French 45th Regiment of Infantry of the Line, taken by Sergeant Ewart at Waterloo.

The telescope and leather container carried by Lieutenant Thomas Trotter at Waterloo. Trotter had served with 3rd Dragoons 1812–14, seeing service in the Peninsular War; he transferred into the Greys in April 1815 and was killed in action at Waterloo.

A remnant of the Greys survived the action and, temporarily brigaded with the Life Guards, repeatedly attacked French infantry positions during the remainder of the battle. Gradually, the tide began to turn in Wellington's favour. The Imperial Guard was broken by the fire of the Foot Guards and Napoleon turned to flee; the survivors of the regiment joined in the pursuit to end the matter.

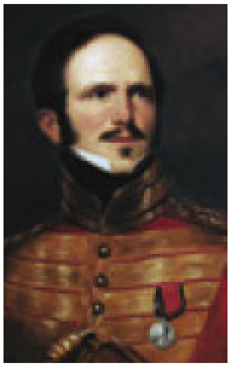
Once memories of the horror of the battle faded, its glories became magnified in the telling and by the passage of years and so the stories began. As Britain grew stronger and richer into the 19th century, largely as a result of the defeat of France at Waterloo, so the true historical significance of the battle began to be appreciated and one of its most famous episodes, the charge of the Scots Greys, became a subject for artists and myth makers. Historical accuracy is the first casualty in the pursuit of romance and while the friendly link that bound the Greys and the 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders (now part of 4th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland) so closely over the years is to be highly valued, there is no doubt that the 92nd never rode into action at Waterloo hanging onto the stirrup-leathers of the Greys. It is, sadly, more probable that many Gordons were trampled or knocked over as the regiment rode through the 92nd in its eagerness to get at the French.

A ram’s horn snuff mull, mounted in brass and with a copper badge and tools. Inscribed ‘Sgt. Anderson’s horn, R.N.B. Dn. F. Troop’, it was reputed to have been recovered from the field of Waterloo after the battle.

The regiment stayed in France for the remainder of 1815 as part of the Army of Occupation and Sergeant Charles Ewart was commissioned Ensign Ewart in 1816 in a battalion of veterans as a reward for capturing the eagle. In

1838, the eagle was ordered to be borne, in facsimile, on the guidons of the Greys.

James Wemyss was commissioned into the 2nd Dragoons as a cornet in 1810 and achieved the rank of lieutenant by the end of 1812. He went on half pay in 1814 when the regiment was partially demobilised following Napoleon’s earlier defeat and exile on Elba. As a twenty-four-year-old senior subaltern he led his troop during the final charge of the Greys at Waterloo. In the aftermath of the battle, he wrote to his half-sisters in Edinburgh on the inside cover torn from a military aide-mémoire. Although severely wounded, he chose not to give them reason for concern:



(© National Museums Scotland)

The Field of Battle

June 19th 1815

My Dear Sisters,

I am happy to inform you that we have had a famous battle and licked the enemy heartily – I am one of six officers only that remained upon the field to the last and am happy to say unhurt although I have had two horses shot under me and balls about several parts of my dress. Our Regt. has suffered very severely. We have only about twenty six men including officers remaining on the field.

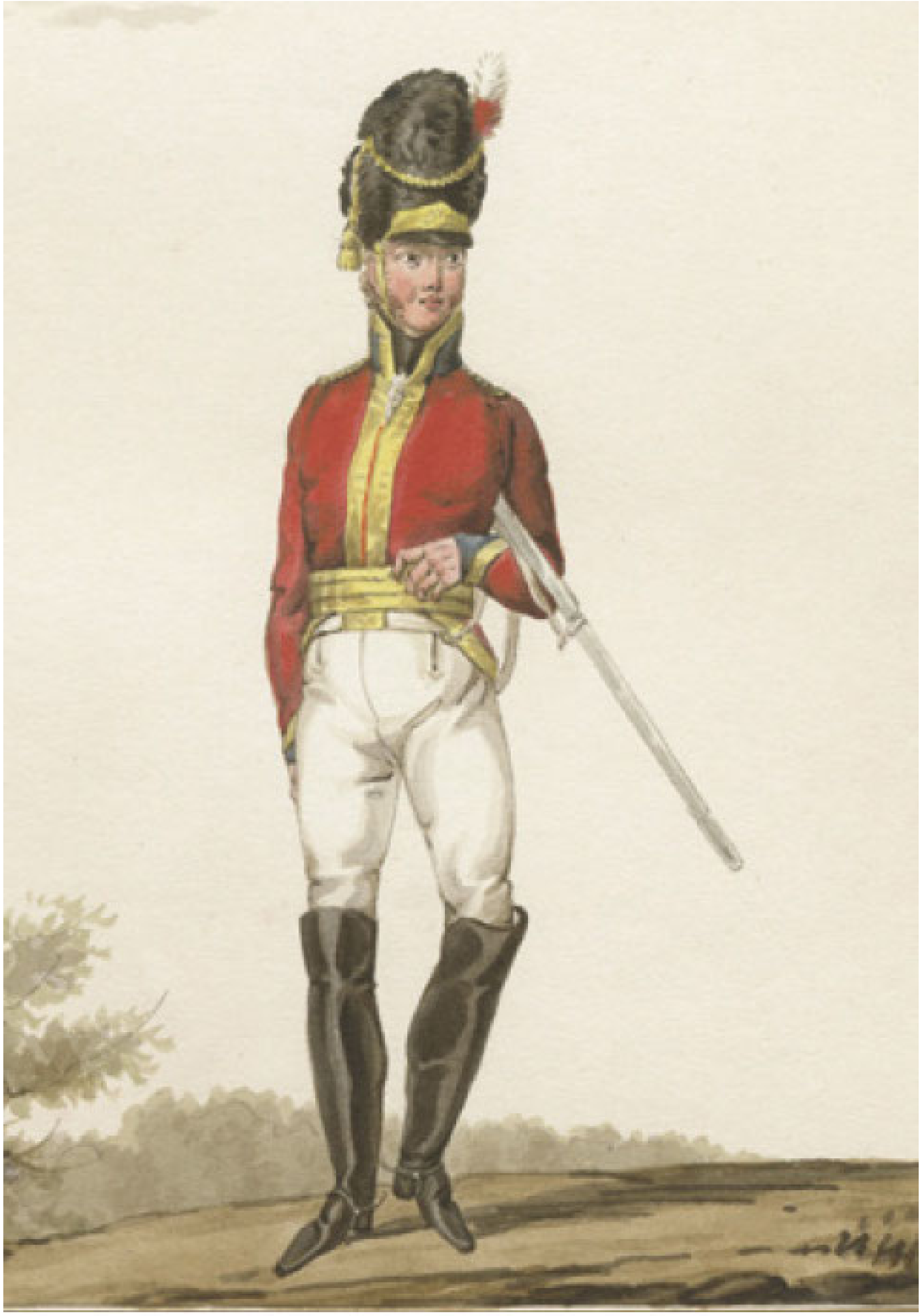
Your affectionate Brother,

James Wemyss

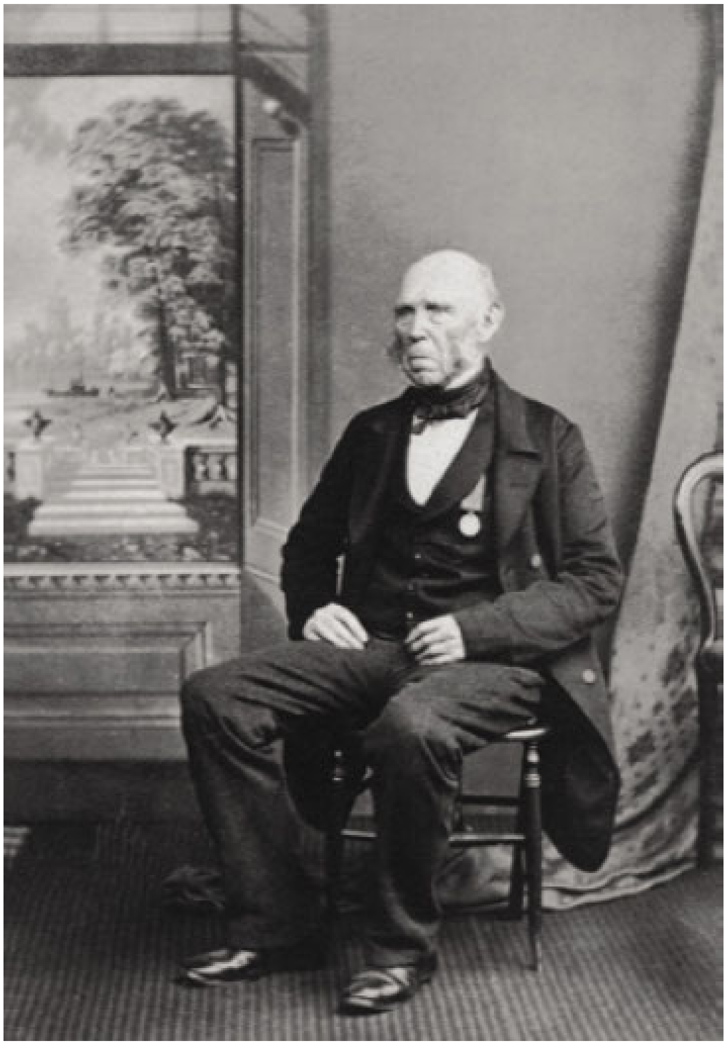
The note found its way to Scotland with the help of a fellow officer who was dispatched to Brussels. Written from the field of battle, it must have been composed amid a landscape strewn with the carnage of fallen and mutilated bodies, both human and horse.

Wemyss was later appointed inaugural Chief Constable of the Durham Police Force, becoming highly respected in the region, where he was known as 'The Gallant Major'. He died in 1848, ironically the year in which France's Second Republic was formed under Louis-Napoleon, nephew of and heir to Napoleon Bonaparte.

Jonathan Findlay



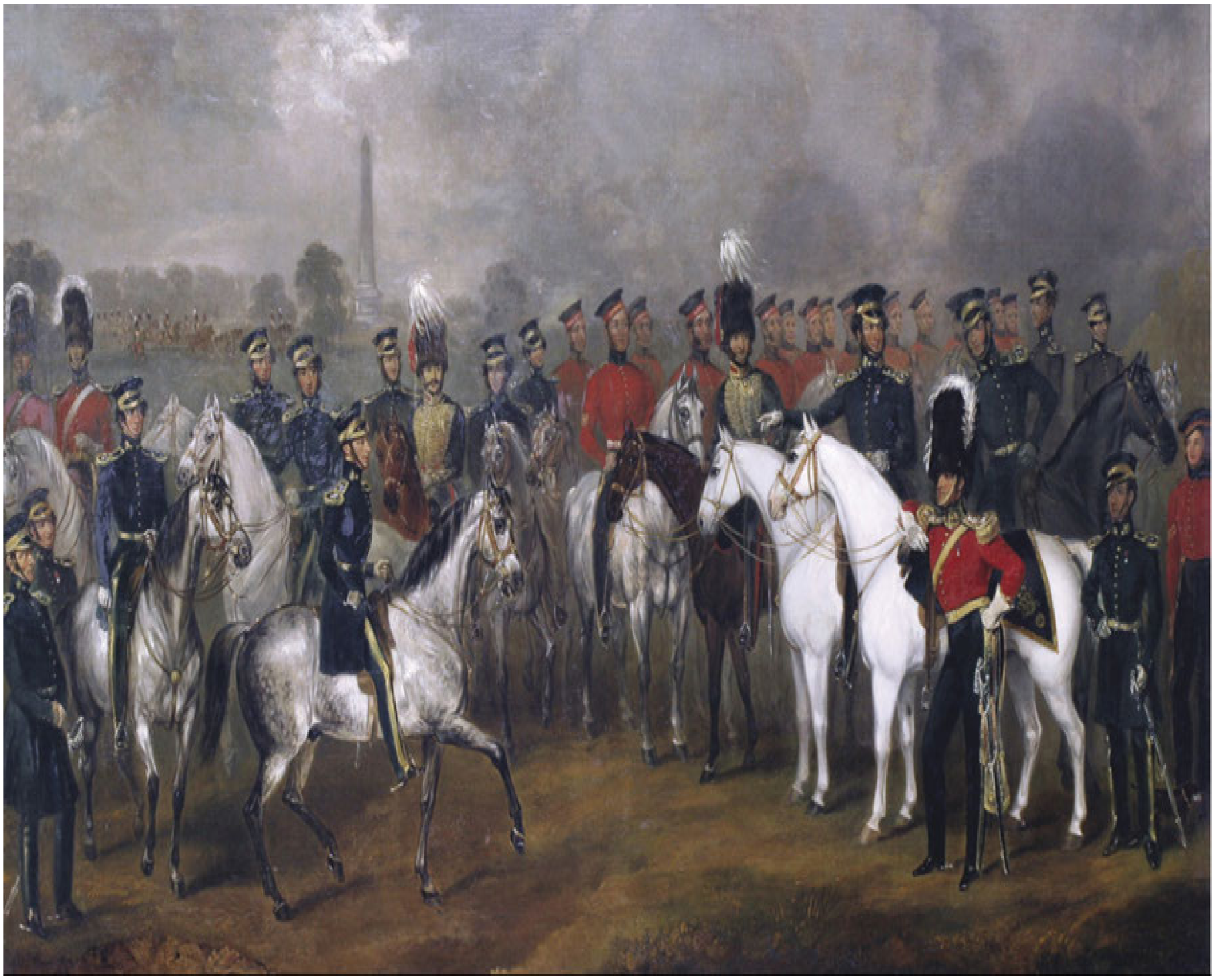
Officier des Dragons d'Elite de la Garde Royale Anglaise; watercolour by Noël Dieudonné Finart, c. 1815–16. Incorrectly labelled by the artist, this painting represents a subaltern of the Greys during the occupation of Paris. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



Private William Smith wearing his Waterloo medal, c. 1866–67. Photographed in old age, Private Smith is thought to have been the last surviving private soldier of the Greys who had fought at Waterloo.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER THREE



Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Sandys and officers and men of 2nd Dragoons, with two officers of the Royal Horse Artillery, depicted at a review in Phoenix Park, Dublin, 1836–37; oil on canvas by John Ferneley, Snr., 1838. Lord Sandys is shown dismounted and in Dress uniform, leaning on his saddle, while the officers and most of the soldiers are shown in Undress; Major Charles Wyndham, who succeeded Sandys as the Lieutenant-Colonel in 1837, is shown with his arm extended and to Sandys's right.

3RD DRAGOON GUARDS

The period of fractionally less than forty years between the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 and the beginning in 1854 of the war with Russia, known as the Crimean War, was for many years referred to by British historians as the 'Long Peace'. This phrase reflected the fact that Britain was not at war with any other power in Europe during the period and ignored a later, and longer, period of similar peace between 1856 and 1914 but, despite that, the phrase remained in popular-historical usage well into the 20th century. Wars were fought in India, China, New Zealand and southern Africa during the Long Peace and these involved soldiers of the British army as well as, in India and China, those of the East India Company's armies but none involved the regiments that are the subject of this book.

If all was officially peaceful in terms of Britain's European foreign policy for the four decades after Waterloo, the position was very different at home for much of the time. The Industrial Revolution had gained momentum in the years since the end of the 18th century and, although it made Britain the leading industrial power in Europe until the late 19th century, its effects on the country's social fabric were far-reaching and traumatic. Industrialisation created new cities where only villages or towns had been and removed work from hands and gave it to machines. Rural areas suffered first depression and then depopulation as manufacturing was increasingly centralised; widespread unemployment and poverty followed. Life was comparatively cheap, capital punishment and transportation were the norm for major and minor offences and widespread civil unrest was so common as to be predictable. Resistance to industrialisation occurred sporadically throughout the first two decades of the 19th century, the societies which organised it being popularly known as the Luddites – supposedly after a Nottingham weaver of the late 18th century, 'Ned Ludd', to whom the breaking of some frames for the weaving of stockings was attributed: the societies' inflammatory leaflets were often signed 'Ned Ludd'. These pressures combined with failed harvests, rising prices and clamour for electoral reform until, by the late 1820s, British society appeared to be on the brink of revolution. Between the mob and the legislators stood the army and, for regiments stationed at home between Waterloo and the Crimea, a principal task was the maintenance or restoration of law and order. Cavalry regiments were ideally suited to the task. In giving evidence to a Parliamentary Finance

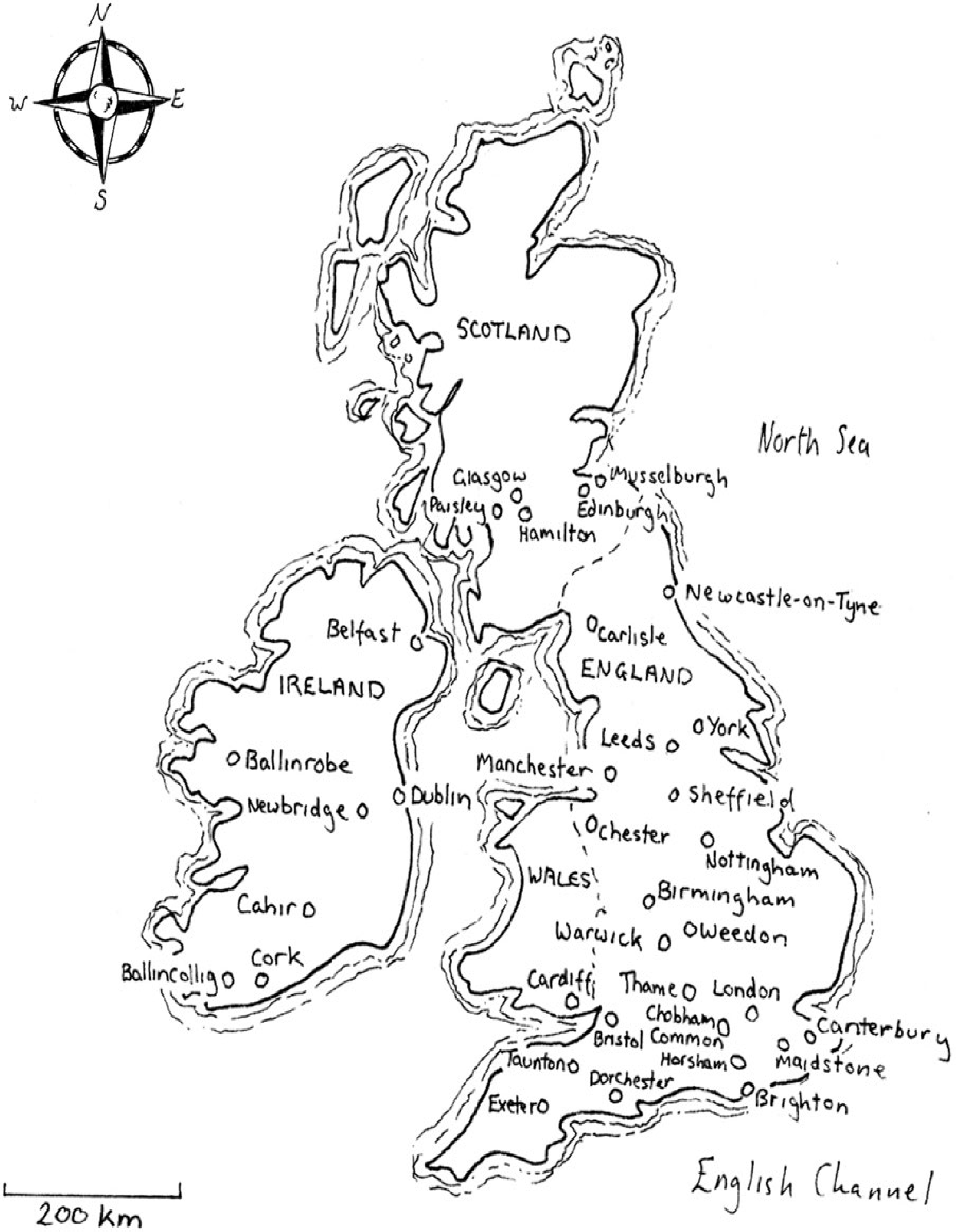
Committee in 1828 the Duke of Wellington – though never an enthusiastic supporter of the mounted arm in its battlefield role – said:

> It is much more desirable to employ cavalry for the purposes of police than infantry; for this reason: cavalry inspires more terror at the same time that it does much less mischief. A body of 20 or 30 Horse will disperse a mob with the utmost facility, whereas 400 or 500 infantry will not effect the same object without the use of their firearms, and a great deal of mischief may be done.

Cavalry could do mischief of course, especially when they were yeomanry – part-time cavalry drawn either from those sectors of rural society least likely to contain sympathisers with the grievances of an urban mob or from poorly disciplined urban tradesmen with the same attitudes. Occasions such as the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 in Manchester are well recorded and appal far more now than they did at the time, simply because such occasions of mob dispersal by violent means were frequent and rarely thought of as unusual or excessive – despite contemporary propaganda to the contrary.

Cavalry regiments, because of their role as mounted police, rarely served as complete regiments anywhere in Britain or Ireland but were divided by troop or half-troop and often widely dispersed through particular districts; their presence, it was felt by government, acted as a discouragement to orchestrated mob violence. When, in January 1816, the 3rd Dragoon Guards returned from France, then newly experiencing a restored monarchy, the regiment was immediately reduced to a peacetime establishment and posted to southern Yorkshire for six months before sailing for Ireland; on arrival there its strength was further reduced. The regiment remained in Ireland – at Ballinrobe, County Mayo, from 1816 to 1818, in Dublin in 1819 and at Cahir, County Tipperary, in 1820 – before passing two years in south-west Scotland, based in the potential trouble spots of Hamilton, Paisley and Glasgow, where industrial unrest was common. In 1821 the lowest of peacetime establishments was fixed: six troops containing 362 officers and men with 253 horses, it rarely being possible or necessary to mount the entire regiment. During its time in Scotland, the regiment was united for the visit of King George IV to Edinburgh in 1822. The King landed at the port of Leith and the regiment formed part of his guard of honour, later being reviewed by him on the sands at Musselburgh – a favourite place for Scottish reviews because of its size, accessibility from Edinburgh and agreeable position. The two years 1823–24 were spent in northern England – in Newcastle upon Tyne and Manchester – after which the period 1824–28 was spent in Ireland. In 1828 the regiment returned to Scotland for one year, moving from there to the English Midlands and then to the West Country.

Great Britain and Ireland 1816–56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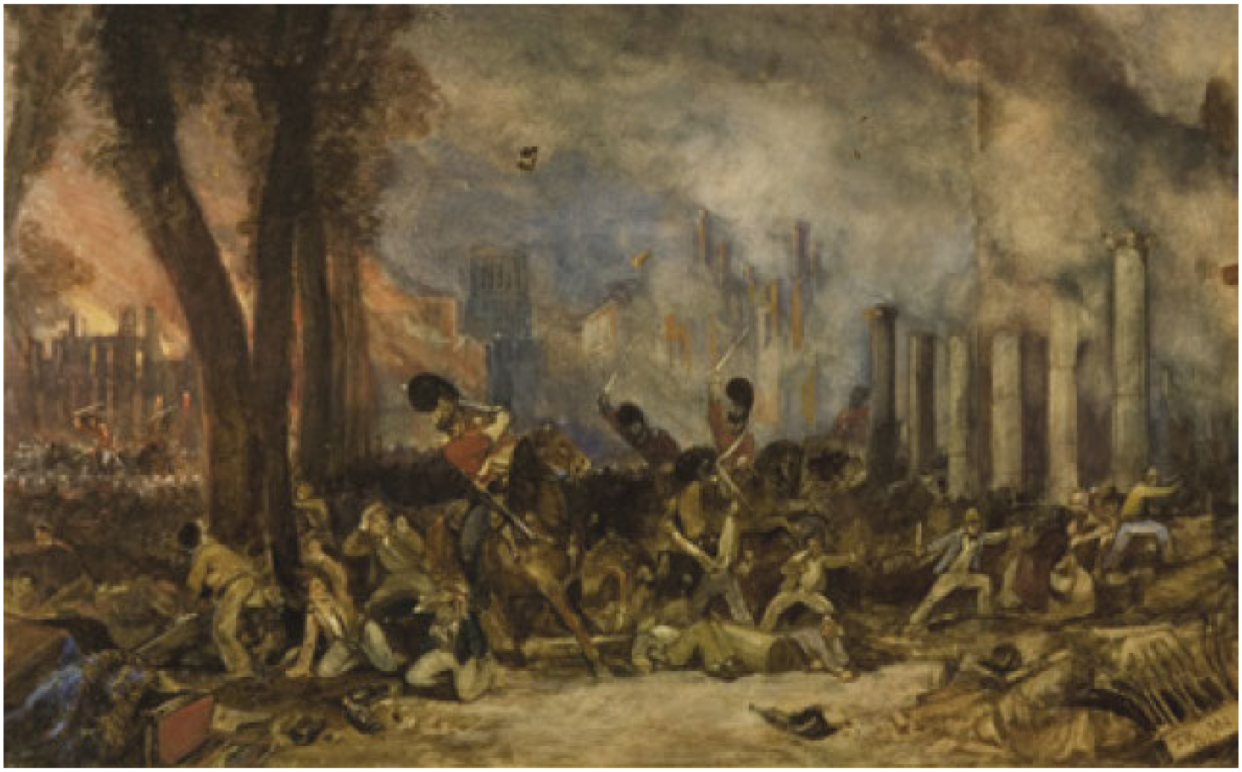
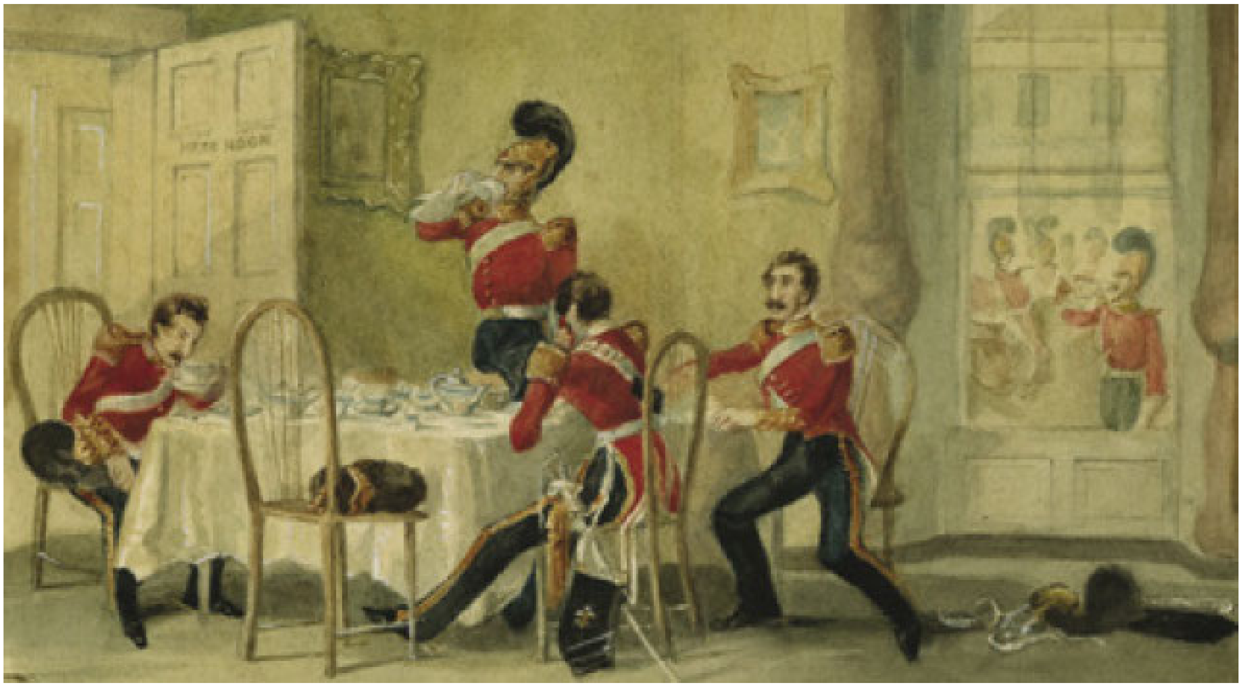


Soldiers of 3rd Dragoon Guards sabreing rioters in Queen Square, Bristol, Sunday 31 October 1831; watercolour by Thomas Leeson Rowbotham, c. 1831. (Bristol Museum and Art Gallery/Bristol City Council)



Officers of 3rd Dragoon Guards hurriedly finishing breakfast while the trumpeter blows ‘Assembly’ outside the mess window in barracks in Dublin; watercolour ascribed to Michael Angelo Hayes, c. 1840. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

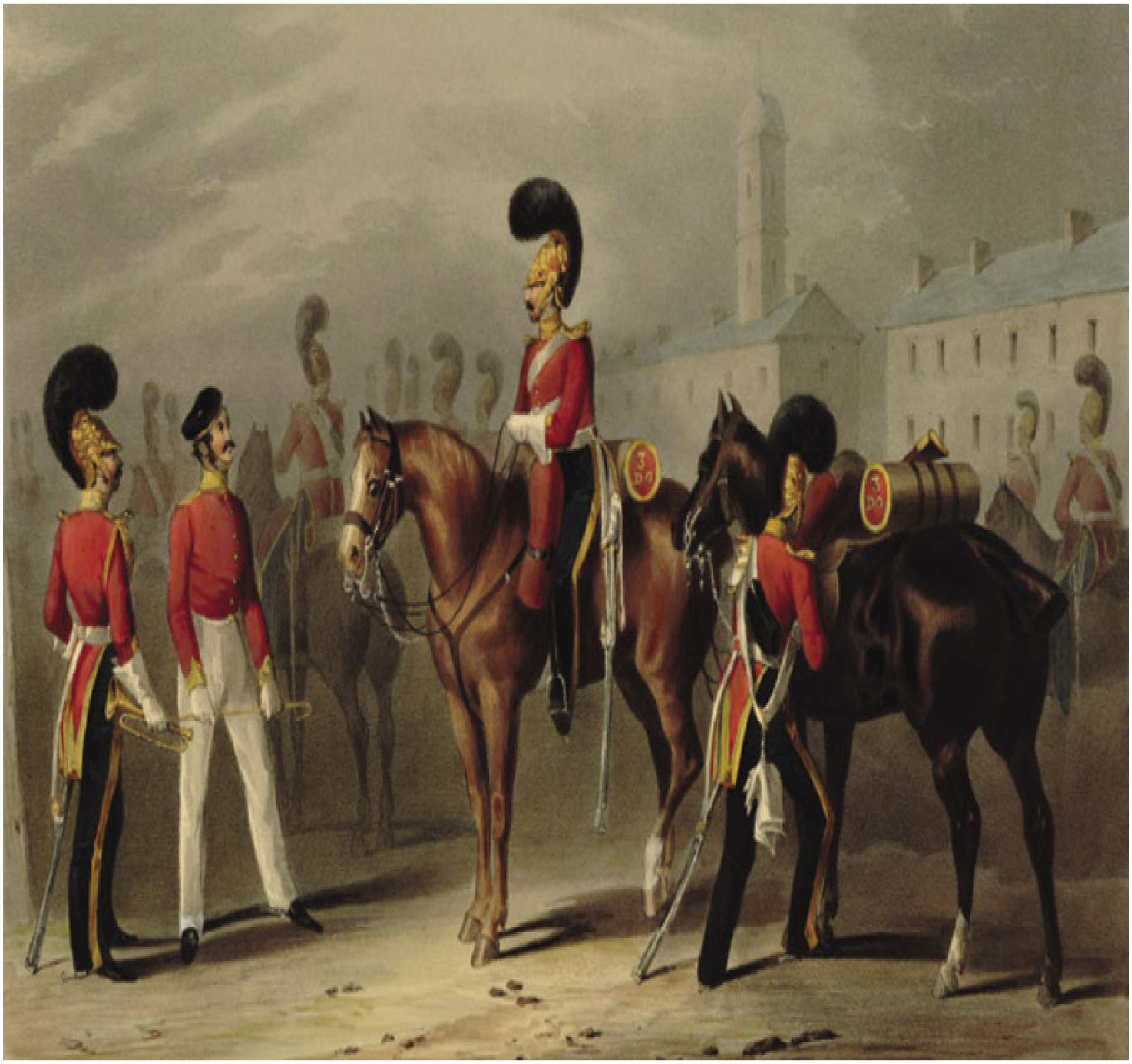
As a form of economic stability gradually returned after the ending of the war, the pressure for reform of the electoral system grew, especially from those disenfranchised by the existing system. The numbers of Members of Parliament and the areas which they represented had not kept pace with the changing nature of Britain during the Industrial Revolution and so, among many other parliamentary abuses and anomalies, formerly thriving communities retained their member – despite being moribund – and the new industrial centres of the Midlands and North remained proportionately unrepresented. Elections in Britain, throughout the 18th century and before any prospect of a secret ballot, were often riotous affairs with nepotism and bribery running neck and neck and with the mob, rural as well as urban, being frequently enlisted – despite being disenfranchised – to intimidate the voters. Universal male suffrage was not to come to Britain until 1918 so the widespread disturbances that preceded the passing of the first Reform Bill in

1832 largely involved masses of people who were never intended to benefit from the Bill's inception.

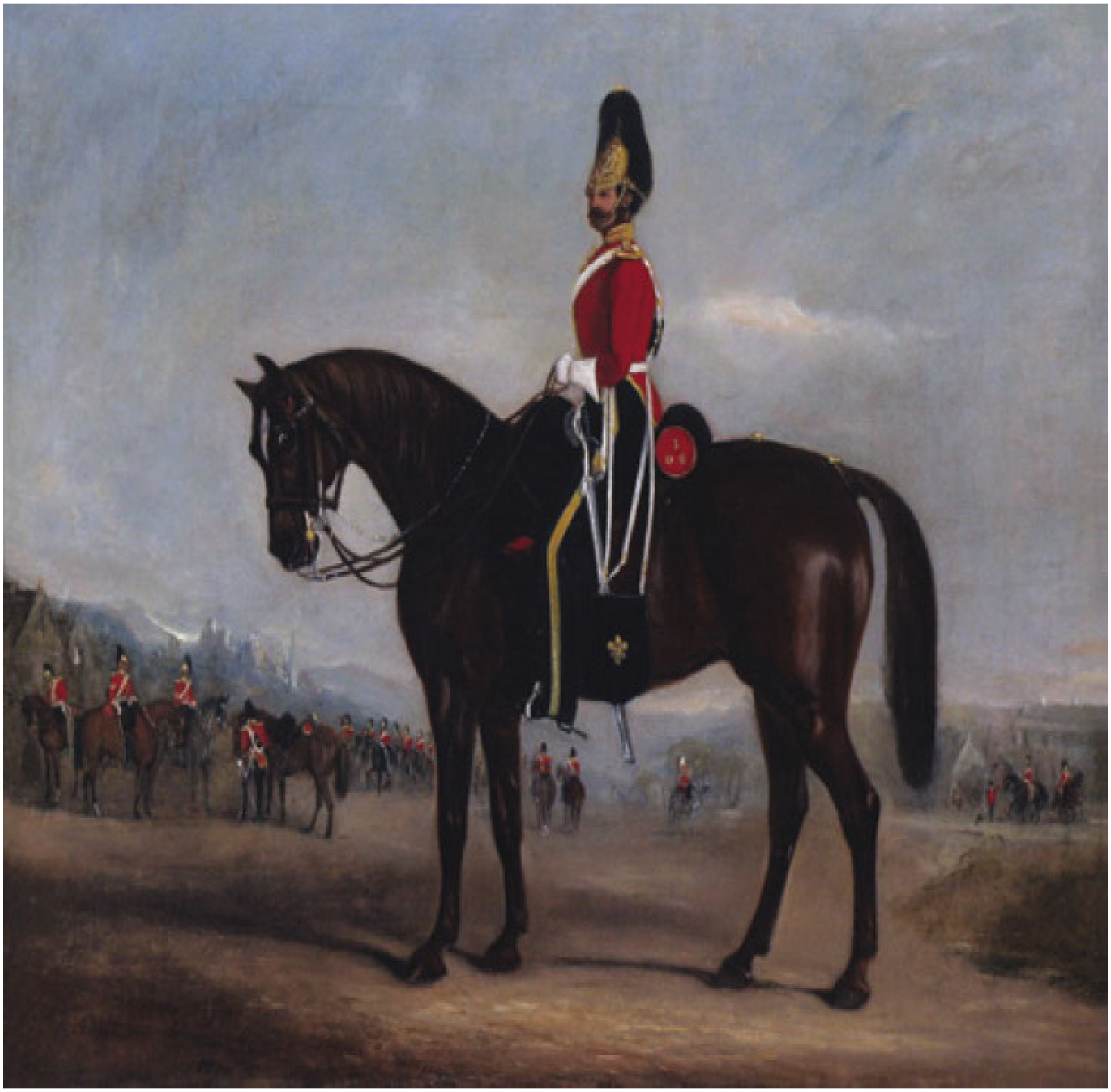
One of the worst pre-Reform riots took place in Bristol in 1831 and directly involved the regiment, a troop of which was stationed there on recruiting duty. The Recorder of the City of Bristol, Sir Charles Wetherell MP (1770–1846), was vociferously opposed to any parliamentary reform and when he arrived at the city in October 1831 to open the assizes his presence was sufficient to provide an excuse for anarchy; Bristol had a reputation as a city with a volatile mob, especially at election times. Special constables were sworn in and three troops of cavalry, one of the 3rd Dragoon Guards – consisting of thirty-three men and horses commanded by Captain William Warrington – and two (forming a squadron) of the 14th Light Dragoons, were placed in readiness to restore order if necessary. Crowd control in Britain in the 1830s was little different to that practised against rioters in modern Britain, even allowing for the noticeable change in the value of life and the armament deployed by the forces of law and order. The soldiers of the 14th Light Dragoons, a regiment that had recently earned itself a reputation in the West Country for undue violence in crowd control and which was unpopular with the mob as a result, were pelted with anything peltable; tempers frayed and people got hurt – on both sides. Restraint on the soldiers' part was accompanied by an absence of firm leadership from the senior officer present, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Brereton – in command of the Bristol recruiting district – who delayed issuing direct orders until the riots were well advanced. The Mansion House was sacked, two gaols burnt to the ground and other public buildings set alight by the mob in a frenzy of drunken destruction. The 14th was sent away by Brereton, who felt that the Light Dragoons' presence was provoking the mob, and Warrington was unable to get cogent or lucid instructions from his superior officer; he refused to act without them. Warrington had been in command of his troop for fifteen months prior to the riots and was assisted by a single subaltern, the recently commissioned Cornet Charles Kelson. When, eventually, both Brereton and one of the few magistrates who could be found arrived and sanctioned the use of force, the 3rd Dragoon Guards' troop trotted into Queen Square, part of which was ablaze and most of which was full of drunken and pugnacious rioters, and proceeded to lay about them with their swords. Being too few in number to have much effect, they held the balance until the squadron of the 14th, under command of Major William Beckwith –

a Waterloo veteran – could be recalled. The combined cavalry force – aided by seven or eight troops of rural yeomanry from the North Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire regiments that sabred the urban mob with alacrity – cleared the streets in a matter of a few hours. Casualties were considerable – the number 250 has been suggested – and recriminations inevitable. Both Brereton and Warrington were tried by court martial, the latter being subsequently allowed to retire by sale of his commission on account of poor health. Brereton shot himself during the course of the trial. In giving evidence at Warrington's court martial, Major Beckwith stated:

> the impression on my mind was that Captain Warrington and the 3rd Dragoon Guards were in a great measure paralysed by the imbecility and misconduct of those who ought to have directed them. I have further to state that during the time I had a personal opportunity of observing Captain Warrington, he appeared to me alert, zealous and desirous to do his duty.



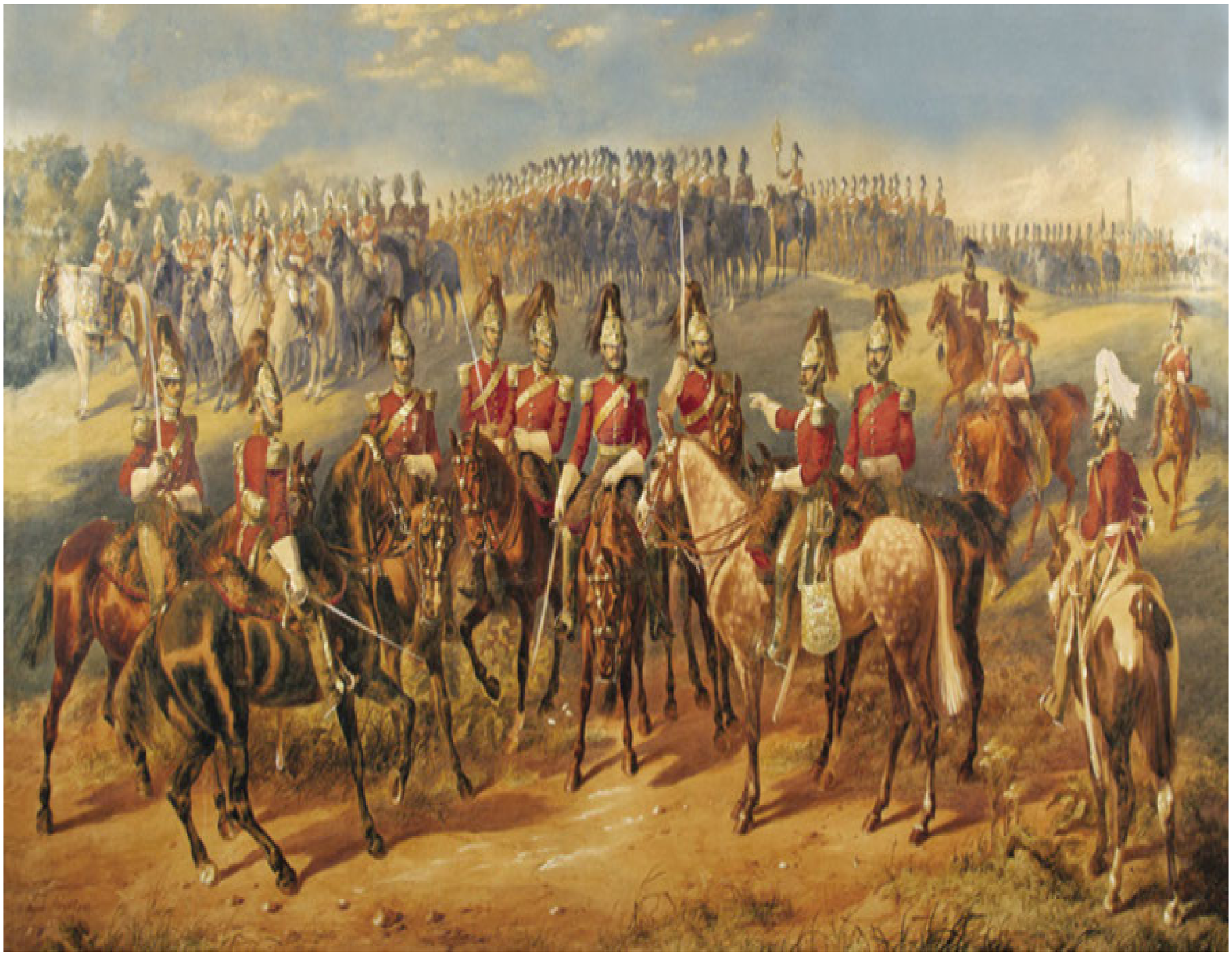
Two private soldiers in heavy Marching Order with another in stable dress, together with a trumpeter, 3rd Dragoon Guards, Dublin; coloured lithograph by J. H. Lynch after M. A. Hayes, published by Spooner, c. 1840. The regiment was stationed in Ireland 1834–37 and 1843–46; the uniform shown was worn 1834–43. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



An officer of 3rd Dragoon Guards in Undress uniform; oil on canvas by John Ferneley, Jnr., 1850. The officer's troop is shown behind him, with the trumpeter distinguished by being mounted on a grey and with a white plume in his helmet.

For the next twenty-five years, during which civil unrest continued little abated by the implementation of the First Reform Act (1832) but fuelled

by widespread economic deprivation, the 3rd Dragoon Guards continued to be stationed throughout Britain and Ireland. Between 1834 and 1837 the regiment was dispersed by troops throughout Ireland, with Regimental Headquarters in Dublin. The following six years were spent in Scotland and England before returning to Ireland in 1843, to an island fast in the grip of famine and experiencing hardship and misery to an extent unknown to the mainland; the regiment was stationed at Ballincollig, County Cork, in the period 1844–46. At the end of 1846, it moved to Scotland and was stationed at Hamilton for the two years 1847–48, during which period it was called out to act in aid of magistrates in Glasgow and Hamilton. If the 1820s had been the decade of Reform riots, the 1830s and 1840s were those of Chartism, a widespread if disconnected movement convinced that a charter of civil rights and liberties was long overdue. Chartist meetings were vast and frequently peaceful but occasionally degenerated into riots that necessitated the use of special constables and soldiers to restore order; the presence and actions of the soldiers frequently – if unintentionally – exacerbated the situation.

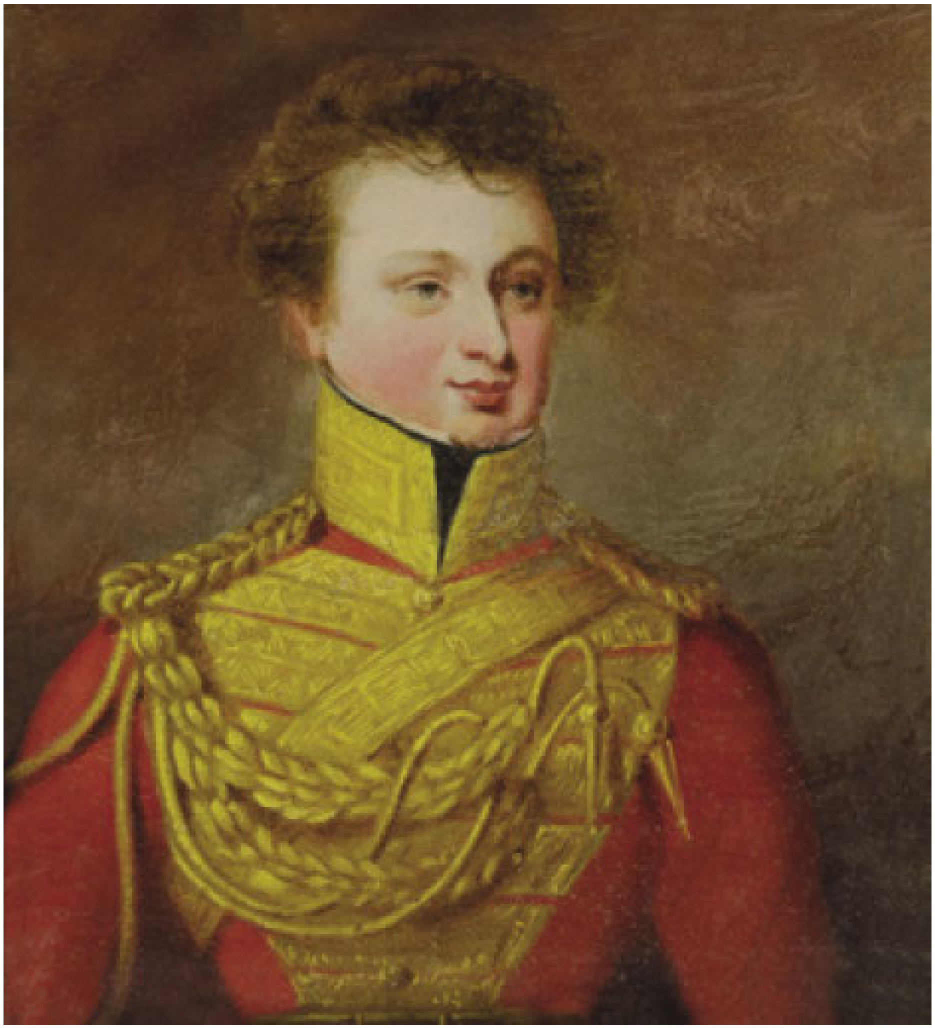


Officers of 3rd Dragoon Guards at a review in Phoenix Park, Dublin; watercolour by Michael Angelo Hayes, 1852. The regiment is formed in the background, with the band in front, to march past by troop; the Commanding Officer, his trumpeter behind him, directs the officers to their positions.

Chartism in Britain and famine in Ireland were compounded in 1848 by fears of domestic revolution spread from across the Channel where France, Austria, Prussia and other apparently settled monarchies were infected one by one with the cry for parliamentary government, for reform and for redress of grievances – all the things which led to barricades, to firing squads and, occasionally and often briefly, to semblances of democracy. Although Britain remained unaffected by the revolutions of 1848, the government was far from complacent about its ability to survive and all the regiments stationed at home were involved, one way or another, in actively cowing their countrymen. Between 1849 and 1852 the regiment was stationed in and around Sheffield, a new industrial town with supposedly great potential for mischief, before returning to Ireland to supervise elections. The regiment remained in Ireland throughout the Crimean War of 1854–56, sending 105 volunteers to serve in other regiments and training men and horses to supply reinforcements.

With Europe at peace after Waterloo, the Prince Regent was able to turn his attention to designing new uniforms for the army. The first-ever edition of officers' Dress Regulations appeared in 1822. For the heavy cavalry these prescribed a new helmet, coat and sword, exotic accoutrements and various Undress uniforms. The 3rd Dragoon Guards also changed their facing colour, this time to yellow velvet, in 1820.

The new helmet, introduced c. 1818, was known as the Roman pattern. It was entirely of metal, lacquered black. The fittings were gilt or brass for all regiments. A plate on the front bore the Royal Arms, title and battle honours. The large crest was black bearskin.



Lieutenant Calverly Trevelyan, 3rd Dragoon Guards, c. 1825, wearing the officers' uniform introduced three years earlier; artist unknown. (Private collection)

At the same time, the Greys adopted a new pattern of bearskin, rather larger than the previous model. It dispensed with the plaited cord but retained the leather peak and gold tassel. The gilt or brass plate bore a scroll inscribed 'WATERLOO'.

The officers' new uniform was based on the pre-1812 coatee, with collars, cuffs and turnbacks of the regimental facing. Loops of gold or

silver lace covered the fronts, collar, sleeves and skirts. Loops were in pairs for dragoon guards, with lace down the front opening and around the turnbacks; the Greys' loops were evenly spaced, with edging on the turnbacks only. A plaited shoulder-cord, forming an aiguillette, was worn on the right shoulder. A laced cloth strap initially worn on the left was soon replaced by a plaited cord matching that on the right. Soldiers' uniforms were similar in style but with yellow or white lace.

In Full Dress, the coatee was worn at court and for formal evening events, with white knee-breeches, stockings and buckled shoes. The headdress was a large bicorne hat with a finely worked 'star loop' and an upright white-overred plume. A smallsword, in a gilt-mounted black leather scabbard, was suspended from a silk shoulder-belt under the coat.

In Dress uniform, on formal duties on parade with troops, the same coatee was worn with the helmet or bearskin, a shoulder-belt and waist-belt, girdle, sword, sabretache and overalls. Officers' belts were laced with gold or silver; the shoulder-belt carried a pouch with flap of facing material, edged with lace and embroidered with the royal cypher. The waist-belt had an oblong metal plate, also bearing the royal cypher and motto. The sabretache, like the pouch, had a laced and embroidered flap displaying regimental battle honours. A gold lace girdle was worn under the waist-belt. Overalls were blue-grey, with gold or silver stripes. A new sword was authorised in 1821 for Dress and Field uniform.

Two forms of Undress uniform were described for officers in the 1822 Dress Regulations. For mounted duties, such as the riding school and informal parades, there was a scarlet jacket, edged all round with gold or silver lace, with collar and cuffs of the facing colour. This jacket closely resembled the mess jacket worn today, but was closed in front with hooks and eyes, and from 1826 had metal shoulder-scales. It was worn with the Dress sword, white belts, black pouch and sabretache, and a blue forage cap with plain leather peak and wide lace band. Overalls were blue-grey, with stripes of the facing colour. Other ranks had jackets of similar shape, but fastened with buttons rather than hooks, and without lace.

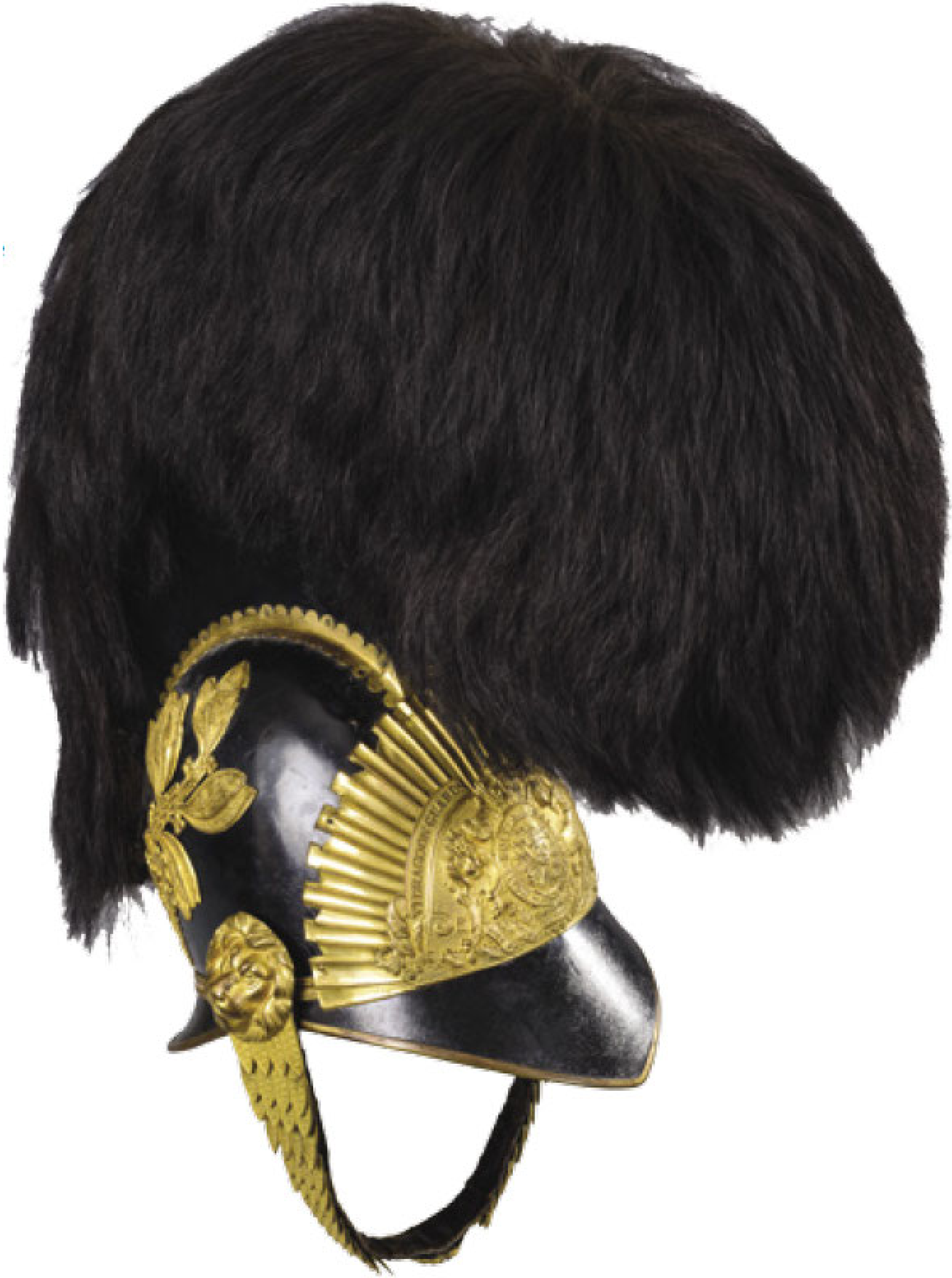
The other Undress uniform, for officers only, was a blue frock coat with black braid loops and trimming. It was worn with the forage cap for routine duties in barracks. In cold weather, a scarlet cloak was worn by all ranks.

A new pattern of bearskin was authorised for the Greys in 1827. This had a metal front plate, tassels and a white feather plume that drooped across the top of the cap.

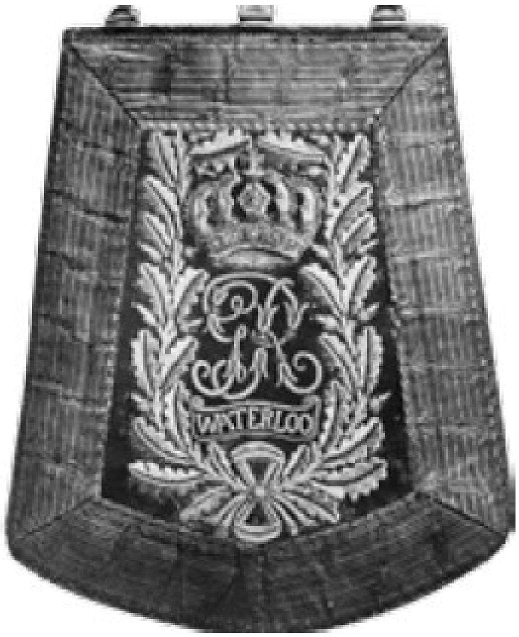
In 1828, major changes were made to Dress uniforms. The lace loops were removed from the fronts and skirts of the Greys' coatees, while the dragoon guards adopted an entirely new coatee. This had plain fronts, two loops of gold or silver 'frog drop' embroidery on the collar, and two pairs of massive embroidered loops on the sleeves. The skirts, now without loops, retained laced turnbacks. The epaulettes that replaced the shoulder-cords had metal scale straps and a regimental device in the crescents. The aiguillette worn on the right shoulder was discontinued and the broad girdle was replaced by a narrower gold waist-sash with tasselled ends. Gauntlets replaced short gloves. Other ranks' coatees followed the officers' style, with yellow or white lace loops, and with metal shoulder-scales.

Dark-blue trousers were introduced for all ranks. The stripes on officers' Undress trousers changed from the facing colour to the lace colour, as did those of other ranks.

Charles Webb



Roman pattern helmet, 6th Dragoon Guards c. 1822.



Officer’s sabretache, 2nd Dragoons c. 1825.

Officer's epaulette, 6th Dragoon Guards 1828–30.

6TH DRAGOON GUARDS

The role of the 6th Dragoon Guards during the Long Peace was little different from that of the 3rd Dragoon Guards and its stations changed as the political climate fluctuated. From Scotland during 1816–17 the regiment moved to Lancashire in 1818 and further south, to Birmingham, during 1819–21.

Concepts of training were restricted chiefly to field days during this period; these were grand reviews where regiments would go through clean, tidy and heavily stylised mock battles consisting of much charging about, wheeling by troop and general equitation aimed more at delighting spectators than at schooling soldiers for the realities either of war or crowd control.

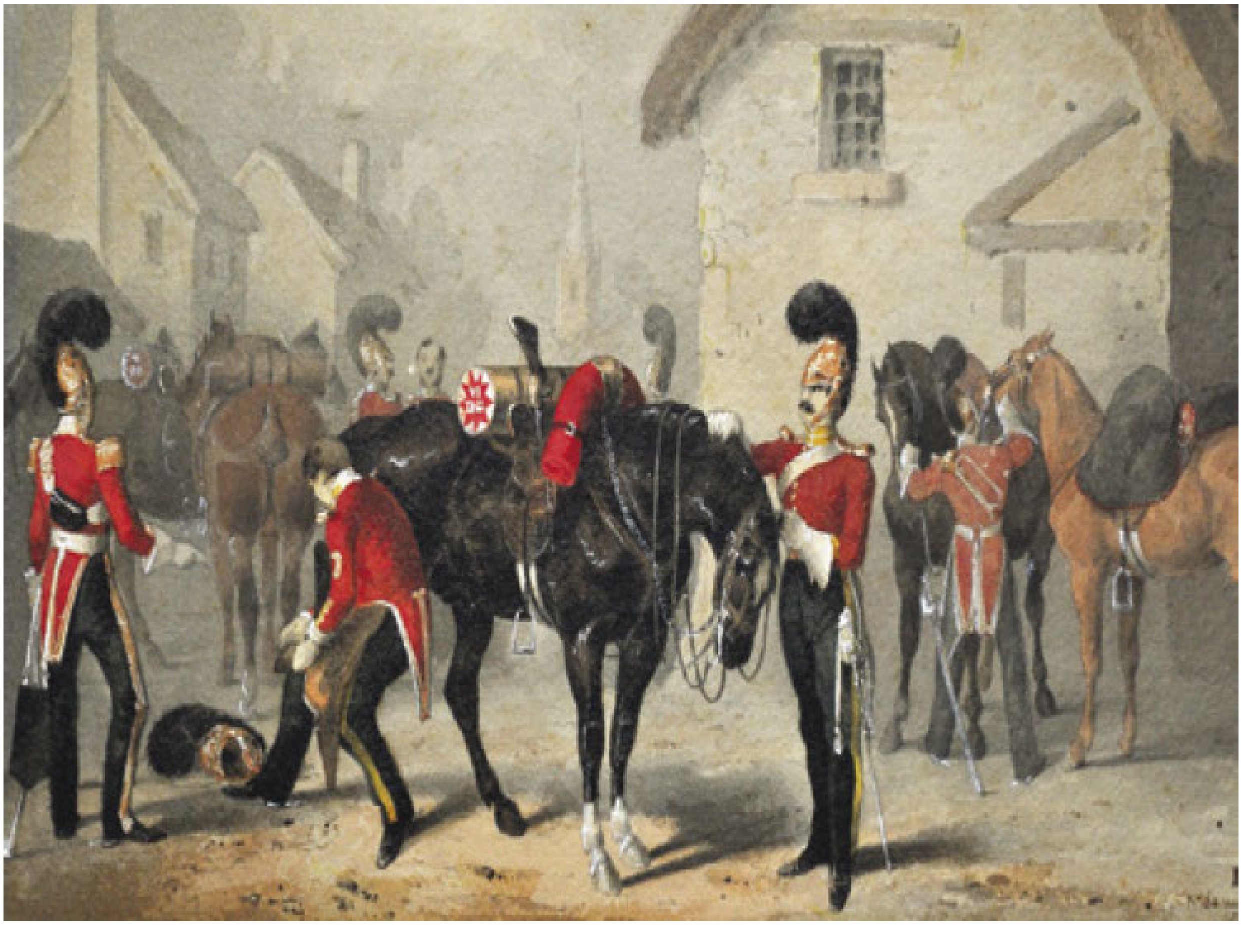
The traditionally separate natures of light and heavy cavalry continued to obtain: the light cavalry was used for skirmishing, reconnaissance and other duties requiring speed above all; the heavy cavalry was retained for the shock effect of the mass charge. By the end of the Long Peace, though, the distinction between roles had blurred considerably and, as was to be demonstrated during the Crimean War, both light and heavy cavalry were able to master and drive home the charge.

As has been said, the campaigns fought outside Europe during the Long Peace affected neither of the dragoon guards regiments dealt with here. Such campaigning was left to the light cavalry, either that of the Crown or that of the East India Company. The East India Company possessed several light cavalry regiments within the armies that it maintained in the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay and these, together with the Crown's light dragoon, hussar or lancer regiments, were ideally suited to campaigning outside Europe. Their suitability was measured principally on the grounds of stature, both of men and horses. Light cavalry troopers were traditionally slighter in build than their heavy cavalry counterparts and their horses were smaller and nimbler too. Since, for the most part, regiments did not take their horses with them on postings to India or Africa – any more than today's cavalry regiments transport tanks overseas unless it is really necessary – heavy cavalry could not be posted outside Europe because the mounts available to them would be unequal to the task of carrying the soldiers. As, however, the distinction between light and heavy cavalry began to blur, so regiments of dragoon guards became more frequent visitors to the subcontinent.

A constant succession of domestic postings, little prospect of foreign adventures and the atmosphere of studied, almost decadent, gentility which gradually permeated the rather monastic, if luxurious, atmosphere of the Officers' Mess, inevitably led to boredom, inefficiency, corruption and petty squabbling. Under the circumstances, it is remarkable that any of the dragoon guards regiments stationed at home during the Long Peace remained effective. The Carabiniers suffered from ennui as much as any regiment but one spectacular case has survived to be retold.

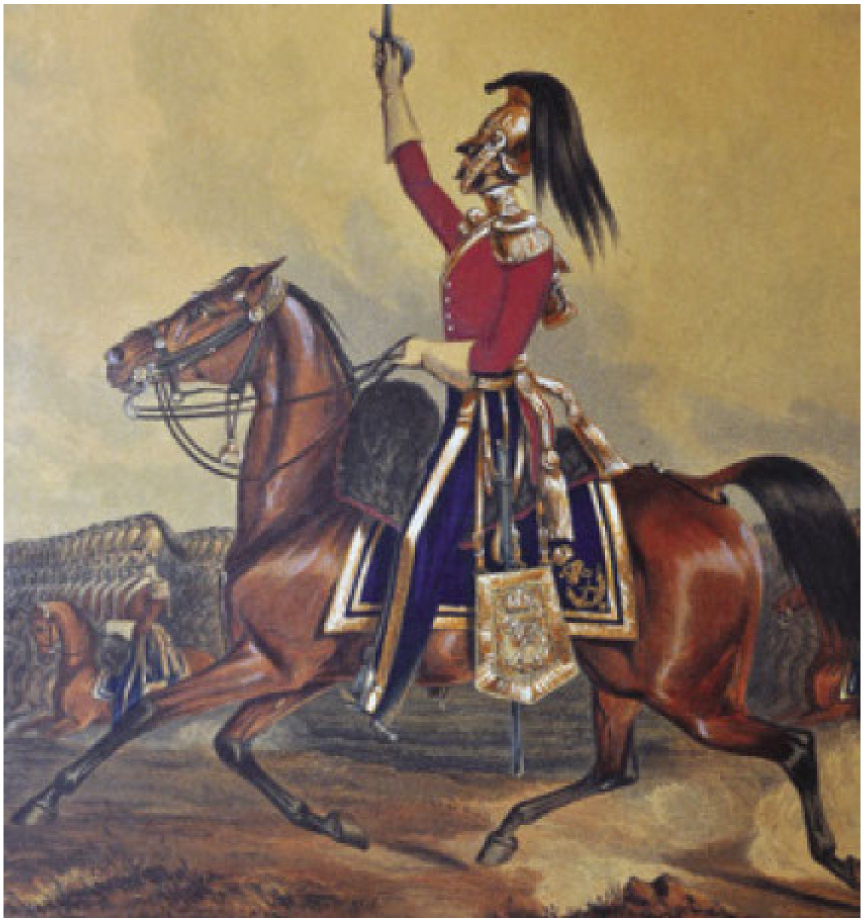
Lieutenant-Colonel St George French, who had joined the regiment as a cornet in 1793 and commanded it since 1811 – and clearly felt himself well installed and beyond reproach – was still in command when the 6th was inspected during its stay in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1820. Inspecting the regiment was the Inspector-General of Cavalry, Major General Lord Edward Somerset, who had commanded the Household Brigade at Waterloo. The character of such inspections depended chiefly upon the acuity of the inspector, so it may well be either that Lord Edward was feeling more sharp than usual or that rumours that all was not well had filtered through to the Horse Guards. Certainly someone had been at work spreading alarm and despondency, because the quartermaster was arraigned before a court martial and accused of writing an anonymous letter that hinted, apparently with some lack of subtlety, that the paymaster was dishonest. The degree to which the anonymous suggestion was accurate does not seem to have been investigated, or at least is not reported, but the quartermaster was acquitted. Colonel French, on the other hand, was called before a court martial to answer a total of six charges. These were: 1,'keeping a woman in barracks';

2,‘inflicting a greater punishment on serjeants McLaughlin, Byrne and Gilroy than was awarded them by the sentence of a regimental court-martial’; 3, that he had openly and publicly ‘dealt in horses’; 4, ‘fraudulent and unbecoming conduct in the sale of a mare’; 5, having sold a troop horse to the Regimental Major and thus making a personal profit at public expense; and 6, ‘for having cut out and defaced … the troop registers of horses relative to the years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814’. French was acquitted of charges 3 to 6, found guilty of the first charge and guilty but for the best of motives – that of the maintenance of regimental discipline – of the second charge. He was sentenced to be admonished and reprimanded and was allowed to retain command of the Carabiniers; King George IV personally approved the sentence and expressed his confidence in French’s capacity for command.



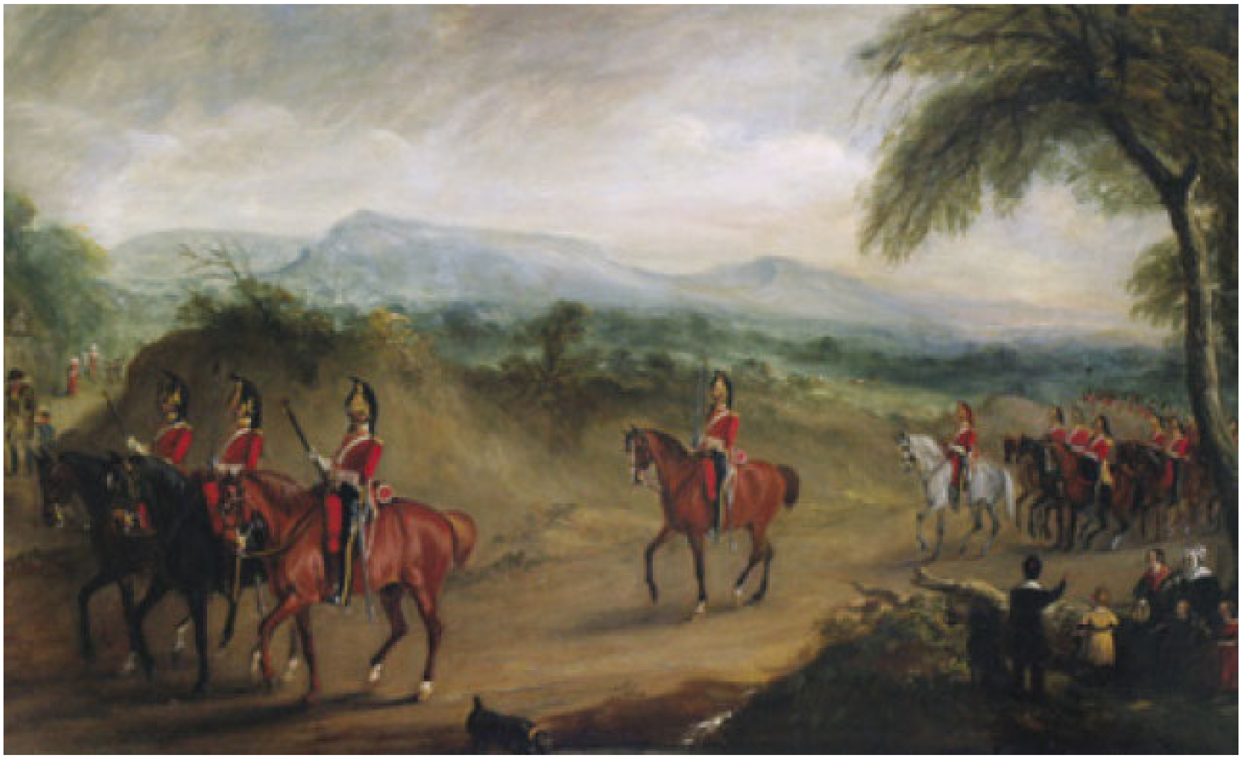
6th Dragoon Guards in Ireland; watercolour by Michael Angelo Hayes, 1841. A soldier holds his mount's head while a farrier – distinguished by the horseshoe badge on his left arm – inspects the horse's offside rear hoof under an officer's direction; in the background, a trumpeter holds two horses. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

In 1822, Colonel French took the regiment to Ireland. Thirteen horses are said to have died on the passage through the Bristol Channel and across the Irish Sea; a further four were subsequently sold, apparently on account of lameness. The years 1822–23 were passed in Cork, with St George French retiring by the sale of his commission in September 1823, after which the Carabiniers moved to Dublin in 1824.

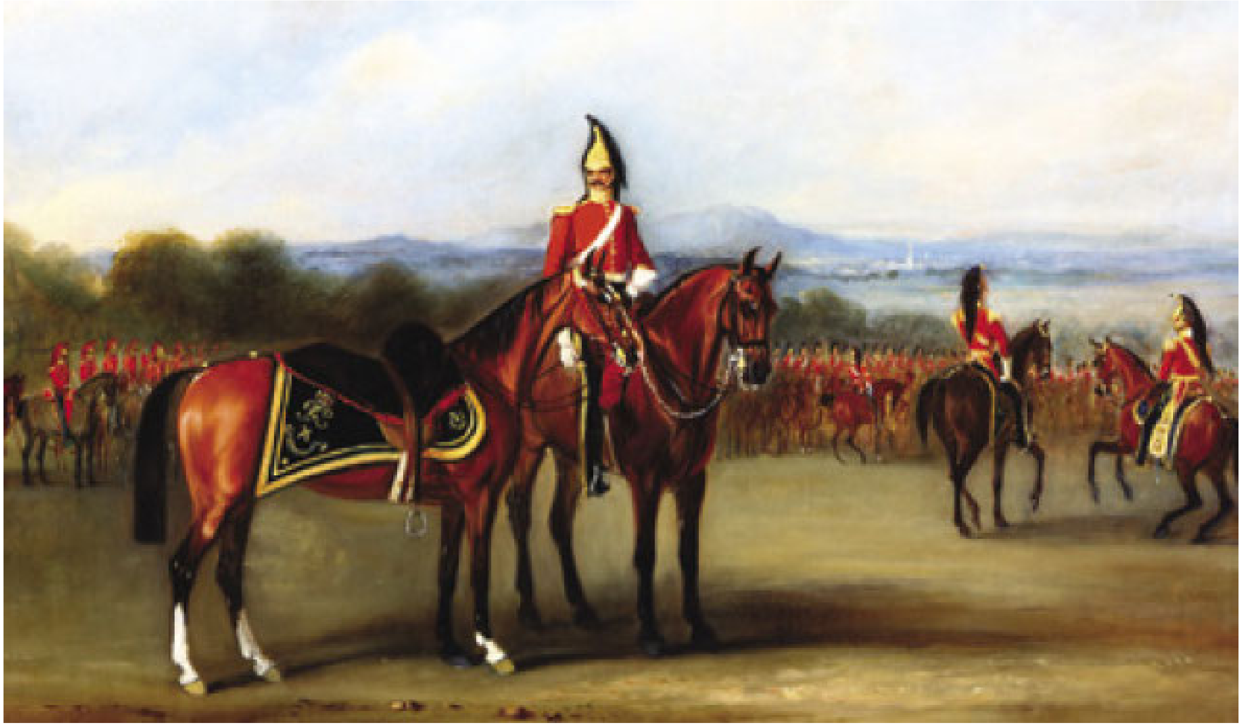


An officer of 6th Dragoon Guards in Review Order, c. 1844, showing the pattern of helmet worn from 1843 until 1847; watercolour by Henry de Daubrawa, c. 1844.

Three years in Ireland were followed by time in Scotland, until 1826, when the regiment returned to England. In 1826 its subtitle ‘Carabineers’ was restored and in the 18th-century spelling. Separated and detached by troops, it patrolled the west Midlands and central southern England for four years until 1830, when it returned to Ireland. After a further four years, the regiment returned to Scotland until 1835, after which it passed two years in Nottingham and Brighton. Three troops of the regiment were on duty in London on 28 June 1838 at the coronation of Queen Victoria; those troops also took part in the royal review in Hyde Park a fortnight later. Further domestic duties followed for the next decade with little of any consequence being recorded, although the modern spelling of the regiment’s subtitle, ‘Carabiniers’, was introduced in 1840 and is still used. The year 1840 found the regiment in Manchester, after which it went to Ireland for the years 1841–42, being posted to Dublin and then to Newbridge, County Kildare; 1843 and 1844 were passed in Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively, after which the Carabiniers moved to York in 1845 and then to Manchester in 1846, prior to another posting to Ireland in 1847.



A troop of 6th Dragoon Guards on the march; oil on canvas by John Ferneley, Jnr., 1845. The trumpeter is distinguished by being mounted on a grey and by the scarlet crest on his helmet.



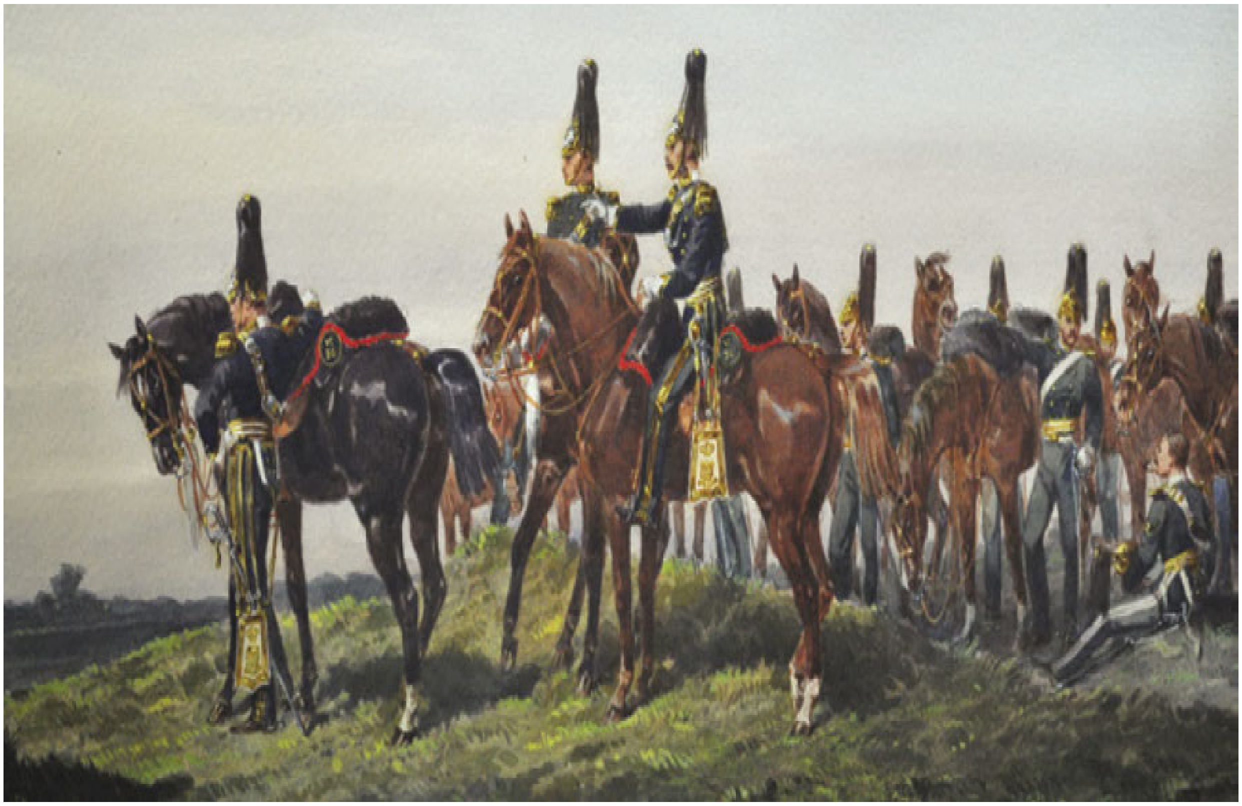
An officer's charger and his orderly, 6th Dragoon Guards; oil on canvas by John Ferneley, Jnr., 1845. The regiment is formed on parade, with the band on its right.

In 1851 the Carabiniers were ordered to take a step that marked the regiment out, when clad in Full Dress uniform, for the next seventy years. The regiment was ordered to convert to the light cavalry role, while retaining the dragoon guards' title. Recruits had now to weigh less than 12 stone (168 pounds or 76 kilos) and the size of their mounts was proportionately reduced; this gives an idea of the weight required of heavy cavalry.

Once converted, the regiment was liable for service in India and, for several years, it awaited orders to move, orders that seemed imminent and were then countermanded as war with Russia became increasingly inevitable. While waiting at home, the 6th provided a squadron, together with the band and trumpeters, to form part of the immense military procession that attended the state funeral of the Duke of Wellington in November 1852.

When war with Russia broke out in 1854 the Carabiniers were not among the initial embarkation of cavalry regiments which formed the Heavy and Light Brigades within the Cavalry Division which was sent to the Crimea. Indeed, by the time that the regiment eventually arrived in the Crimea, having sent several issues of reinforcement horses to the cavalry regiments already there, all the significant battles had been fought and the Allies had settled down in trenches before the naval base, and principal fortress of the Crimea, of Sebastopol. The Carabiniers eventually arrived on Russian soil in August 1855, having been moved out by squadrons. The squadron was a tactical unit generally comprising two troops and was commanded by the senior captain of the two; it was generally used until 1868 only for active service purposes, the troop being retained for peacetime deployment.

The Allies – French, British, Turkish and Sardinian – were well entrenched around Sebastopol and constant reinforcements and acclimatisation, together with the blockading ability of the Royal Navy in the Black Sea, meant that they retained a large measure of control over the Crimean peninsula. The Carabiniers were employed away from Sebastopol – where cavalry was of little tactical use in a siege – in maintaining the blockade against mainland Russia and preventing any build-up of Russian strength which might threaten the Allied flanks. Skirmishing with, and harassment of, small Russian forces was the norm until a truce was agreed at the beginning of 1856, by which time the regiment had moved to Scutari in Turkey, where it remained until returning home in May 1856. Then began the delayed preparations for the regiment’s first passage to India. By the end of the year, travelling in four ships, the 6th Dragoon Guards had embarked for the subcontinent, the first regiment of dragoon guards or heavy dragoons to do so.



Officers and men of a troop of 6th Dragoon Guards depicted in the uniform worn 1851–55; watercolour by Orlando Norie, c. 1860–65.

Lieutenant William Gair served in the Crimean War before joining the 6th Dragoon Guards in India. Leading a search patrol through the cellars of Sebastopol after the end of the siege, he came across a large, wide-eyed tabby cat looking at him from on top of a pile of rubbish between two badly injured people. The cat was ‘covered in dust and grime, but serene’ and seemed unperturbed by the noise and commotion around him. He did not hiss or scratch when Lieutenant Gair bent down

to pick him up. The cat, who appeared to be seven or eight years old, was taken to the officers' shelter, where he was much admired. He became known as 'Tom' and later 'Sevastopol Tom' or 'Crimean Tom'.

(Courtesy of the National Army Museum)

Tom had a knack of finding food. At a pile of masonry near the docks he disappeared from view and the soldiers following cleared the rubble to find a storeroom full of supplies. He showed the way to other caches near the waterfront. The cat slept and ate in the officers' accommodation and was much loved by both officers and men. In May 1856 he returned home to England with William Gair. After his death the following year, Tom's body was stuffed and is now in the collections of the National Army Museum.

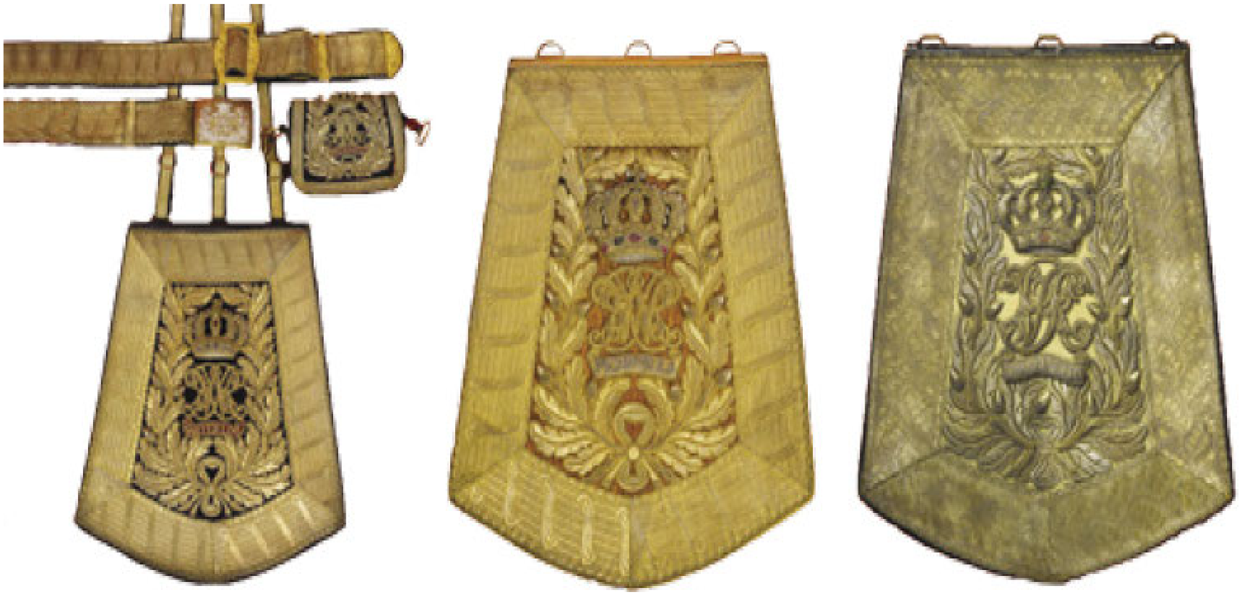
Mick Stanley

The accession of William IV in 1830 led to further changes to cavalry uniform. For the regular army, all lace and embroidery was henceforth to be gold. The Carabiniers, having acquired new uniform in 1828, were thus obliged to do so again.

Further developments followed in 1834, when a new helmet replaced the Roman pattern. It was made entirely of gilt or brass. The rayed plate bore the royal arms and battle honours, and there was floral decoration on the skull and comb. A metal lion's head finial was attached to the front of the comb but for parades a black bearskin crest was fitted over it.

The Full Dress uniform previously worn for levees and drawing rooms was discontinued. Dress uniform, with its gold laced and embroidered accoutrements, was now worn for all formal occasions, with the helmet (or bearskin) in daytime or the bicorne hat for levees and evening occasions. For certain duties, soldiers continued to wear white trousers with their coatees (see page 86, left).

The ornate cypher of William IV replaced that of George IV on pouches, sabretaches and belt-plates. Contemporary portraits often show officers wearing a narrow waist-belt, slung loose in light cavalry style, rather than the wide regulation belt. On active service, had any heavy cavalry regiment been so engaged, the Dress coat would have been worn with white leather belts and plain patent-leather pouches.



Officer’s pouch-belt, pouch, waist-belt and sabretache, 2nd Dragoons, 1830–37; officer’s sabretache, 3rd Dragoon Guards, 1830–37; Victorian-era officer’s sabretache, 6th Dragoon Guards.

For dragoons and dragoon guards, the scarlet Undress jacket and the braided frock coat were both abolished and a plain single-breasted blue frock coat fastened with gilt buttons and bearing metal shoulder-scales was introduced. Illustrations show this coat being worn with Undress belts and a forage cap for field days (see pages 68–9), although a print of c. 1834 (see page 87, left) shows a Greys’ officer wearing an Undress bearskin, without plate or tassels, with a frock coat. Officers’ forage caps of all three regiments still had a gold lace band and a peak edged with gold embroidery.

Further changes of uniform followed the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837. Although coatees remained unchanged, by 1842 the metal front plate of the Greys’ bearskin had been removed, and in 1843 the white feather across the top of the cap was abolished. In 1845, however, a 9-inch upright white plume was authorised, and the white metal Horse of Hanover was restored to the back of the other ranks’ caps. The Queen’s cypher replaced the King’s on pouches and sabretaches.

In 1843 another change of helmet took place for the 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards. The new pattern (see page 79, right) was fitted with a black horsehair mane, giving it a French appearance. It was replaced in its turn by the 1847 or Albert helmet, a German style inspired by the Prince Consort. This was initially of gilt or brass for all heavy cavalry, other than the Greys, and bore foliate decoration on the peak, band and back-seam. The front plate was a 'hobnail' star within an ornate crowned shield. A chin-chain replaced the chinscales of previous helmets. An upright metal 'candlestick' held a drooping horsehair plume. The plume was originally black for all, but in 1854 the 3rd Dragoon Guards were permitted a black over red plume.

The scarlet stable jacket and the braided frock coat were reintroduced for Undress c. 1845, and the stripes on officers' Undress trousers were changed from yellow to scarlet. At about this time the metal scale straps on officers' epaulettes were replaced by cloth straps bearing massive gold embroidery. In 1847 the skirts of the coatee were reduced to about 8 inches in length, though retaining their laced turnbacks, and the laced or embroidered loops were removed from the sleeves, leaving only a single loop on each cuff. In the same year, officers' shabraques (the gold-laced blue saddle cloths) were discontinued, all ranks thereafter wearing only a black sheepskin saddle rug.

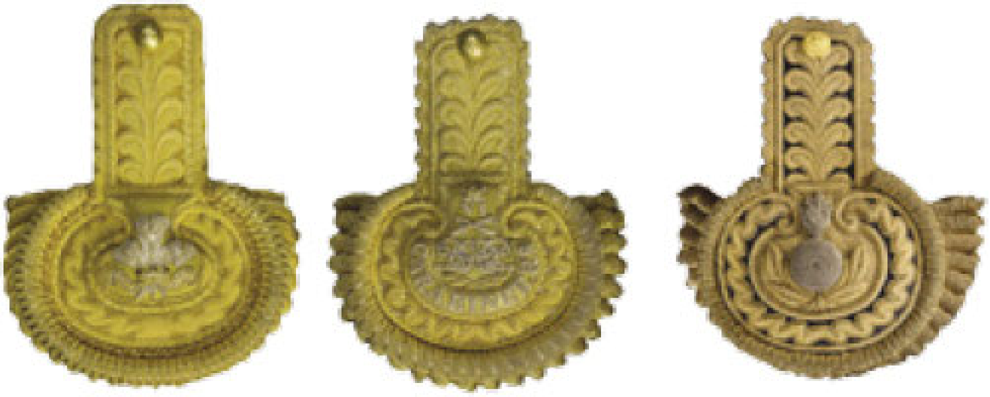
Trouser-stripes reverted to yellow or white in 1851. In the same year, the Carabiniers were selected for duty in India, and were ordered to adopt a blue uniform of light dragoon style, although retaining their Albert helmets. Their jackets were double-breasted, as for light dragoons, but worn with gold-embroidered epaulettes and loops on the collar. The lace on the shoulder-belt was the former 'oakleaf' pattern, but narrower and bearing silver pickers and chains. Pickers (intended for spiking captured guns), double gold or white stripes on the trousers, and swords with more open steel guards, also indicated the Carabiniers' light cavalry status.

The Greys were despatched to the Crimea in 1854. Their campaign uniform was the coatee and bearskin, worn without epaulettes or plumes, and Undress belts and sabretaches. The coatee was replaced by a tunic the following year for all cavalry, and blue tunics were worn by

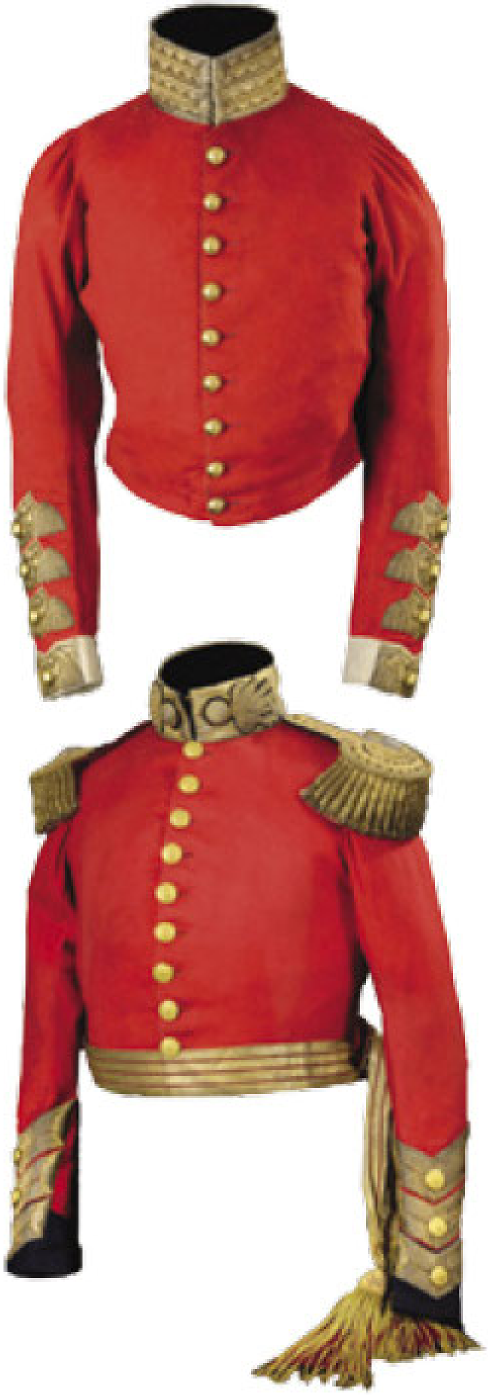
the Carabiniers when they arrived in the Crimea to reinforce the Light Brigade.

Charles Webb

Officer's helmet, 3rd Dragoon Guards 1834–43.



Officers' epaulettes: from left, 3rd Dragoon Guards, 6th Dragoon Guards and 2nd Dragoons c. 1845–55.



Officers' coatees, 6th Dragoon Guards and 2nd Dragoons 1831–47.

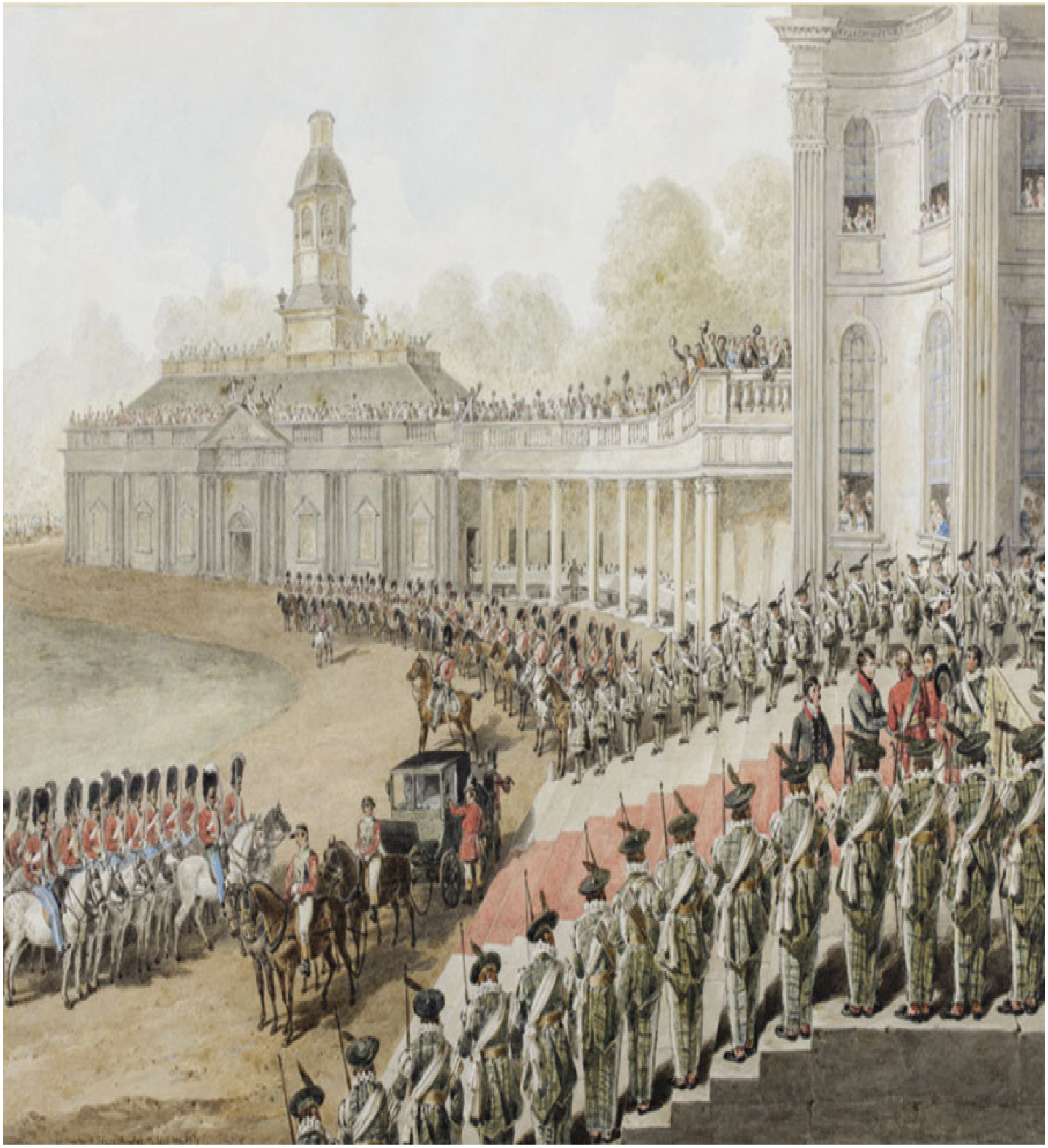
ROYAL SCOTS GREYS

The Greys – like the 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards – spent the four decades of the Long Peace in internal security. The regiment left the Army of Occupation in France on 12 January 1816 and spent eighteen months in Canterbury, a traditional cavalry posting. The following year the regiment was in Scotland, quartered in Piershill Barracks in Edinburgh, until, in July 1818, it moved to Ireland for three years. In 1821 the regiment returned to England, spending a few weeks in the Midlands before being posted to London in July for the coronation of King George IV. In 1822 the Greys moved to Scotland and, with the 3rd Dragoon Guards, were in attendance upon the King during his visit to Scotland in that year. Leaving Scotland in 1824, the regiment moved gradually southwards through England for the next three years in a variety of postings from Carlisle to Ipswich. Between 1827 and 1830 it was stationed in Ireland – at Cahir in County Tipperary, in Dublin and at Ballincollig in County Cork – and, on return, was briefly posted to the West Country before moving to south-east England in November 1830; it spent 1831 and 1832 in Maidstone and Brighton.

Southern England, particularly in the rural areas, was in turmoil during the early 1830s, not exclusively on the question of parliamentary reform but rather to do with rising prices, falling wages, failed harvests and social misery in a society devoid of any system of welfare other than the workhouse. Farmers were blamed by sections of the rural poor who formed secret societies similar to those which had existed in Ireland since the middle of the 18th century and which were less interested in redress of grievances than in seeking revenge: ricks were burnt, animals disabled and farmers' families threatened. The English societies were noted for their threatening messages, usually signed 'Swing' or 'Captain Swing'; these would be left pinned to farmhouse doors or to hamstrung cattle and were deliberately intimidating. Many of those in rural communities who were not directly implicated in the disturbances knew better than to inform on their neighbours and the task of the authorities, aided by soldiers, in attempting to eradicate the rioting, intimidation and damage to property was consequently made difficult. In some villages the sight of a soldier in a red coat was enough to send villagers scurrying for cover, although in others the soldiers were seen as protectors of lives and properties.

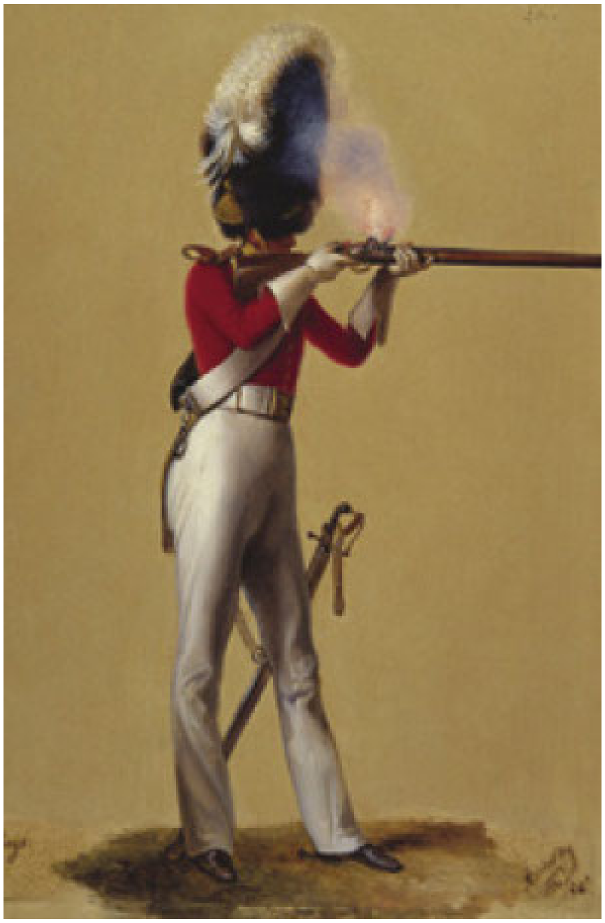
One of the most illuminating, if highly subjective, accounts of soldiering in the Greys in the 1830s was published in 1848. Alexander Somerville's The Autobiography of a Working Man by 'One who has whistled at the plough' devotes fully a third of its length to the period from 1831 to 1832 when Somerville was a private in the Greys, at the centre of a highly publicised military enquiry following a flogging, and something of a figurehead for the vociferous supporters of the Reform movement. 'Somerville the Scots Grey!' was a cry throughout Britain for the supporters of Reform. They, seeing in this apparently unjustly – and savagely – punished trooper a victim symbolic both of the rights of the common man and the anti-Reform nature of the establishment (as represented by a supposedly exclusive and aristocratic cavalry regiment whose officers appeared to be beyond the law), took Somerville up, protested his case in Parliament and used him, quite deliberately, for political purposes. Notwithstanding the detail of the political side of the Reform movement, Somerville's autobiography contains fascinating insights into the working of the regiment for this brief period when it was the centre of such unwelcome publicity.

That he was intelligent, articulate and literate there is no doubt. Indeed, Somerville made the point in his writings that one of the reasons why the exploits of the Scottish Highland regiments during the Napoleonic Wars were so well known is that, unlike most of their English or Irish comrades, they could – and did – write letters home, letters which were frequently published in local newspapers. Somerville had been born in the Lammermuir Hills in 1811 and considered becoming a soldier in his late teens. Imminent starvation made him decide that little alternative existed and in 1831 he was enlisted by a corporal in Edinburgh's High Street, a corporal then bemoaning a short-lived army regulation which had deprived him of his moustache. Once enlisted and examined by the garrison surgeon in the Castle, Somerville and his fellow recruits left from Leith for London by sea. They spent two weeks in London awaiting an escort to take them to the regiment in Brighton, not being trusted – despite repeated pleas – to make their own way there, and they eventually set out on foot in January 1832. After a two-day journey they arrived, were relieved of their clothes – which were in theory burnt but were probably sold to one of the many second-hand-clothes dealers who were among the various types of optimistic parasite who frequented barracks – and were posted to the hospital where a soldier with cholera required the (rudimentary) treatment then available. Cholera was a new disease in Britain and provoked panic. Having come from Scotland, where an epidemic was raging, Somerville and his fellow recruits were suspected of carrying the disease and were placed in a kind of quarantine with the one soldier in the regiment who had contracted it. The victim, Private James Miller – servant to Cornet Lachlan Macquarie – eventually recovered, more by luck than good nursing, and after a fortnight Somerville was allowed to begin the process of becoming a Scots Grey. He was measured for his uniform and his boots and issued with his kit. From his enlistment bounty of £2. 12s. 6d. (about £130 in the early 21st century) he received 10s. (about £25 in the early 21st century), the rest going to pay on account for his uniform and kit. The remaining sum owed, £3. 10s. (about £175 in the early 21st century), would be gradually stopped out of his pay (his daily rate would have been 1s. 1d.) until the debt was settled.

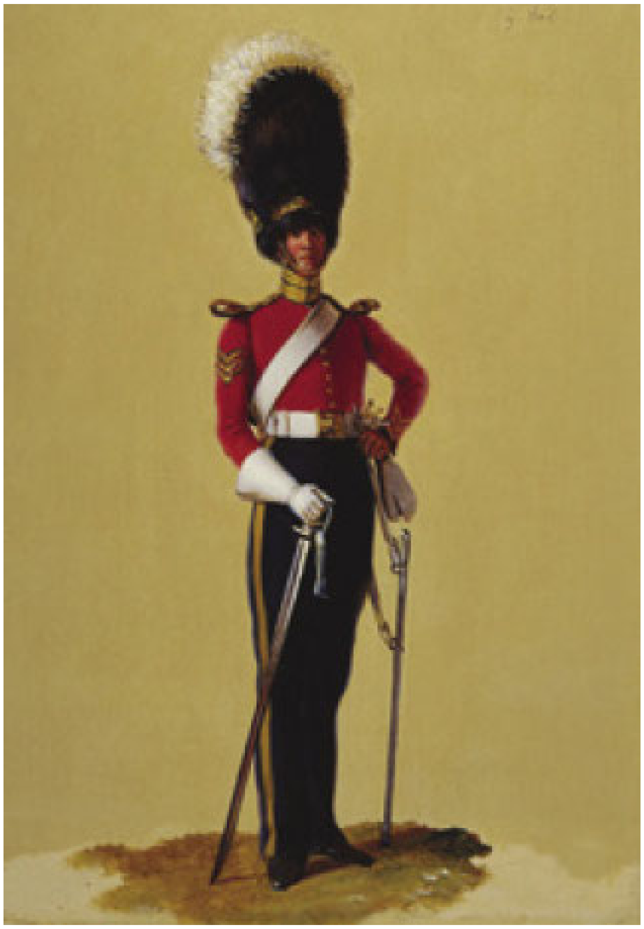


The arrival of King George IV at Hopetoun House, west of Edinburgh, on 29 August 1822, at the end of his visit to Scotland; watercolour by Denis Dighton, c. 1822–23. His escort of 2nd Dragoons can be seen beside the royal coach, with a detachment of Linlithgowshire Yeomanry in the background. Gentlemen of the Royal Company of Archers (the King's Bodyguard for Scotland) line the steps as the Earl of Hopetoun

greets the King. (By kind permission of the Hopetoun House Preservation Trust; www.hopetoun.co.uk)



Private John Wallace, 2nd Dragoons; oil on canvas by Alexandre-Jean Dubois-Drahonet, 1832. Although recorded by the artist as a private, Wallace was actually a corporal when he was painted. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014)



Sergeant George Reid, 2nd Dragoons; oil on canvas by Alexandre-Jean Dubois-Drahonet, 1832. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014)

The regiment was ordered to Birmingham in 1832; Somerville and other recruits not yet trained to ride marched with the baggage train. His almost lyrical account of the march across the rural England of 1832 evokes not-too-distant folk memories of unspoilt villages, dusty roads and apple-cheeked, smocked country people. His account of the regiment's reception in village inns or in the public houses where the soldiers were billeted underlined not only the gastronomic differences between Scotland and southern England but also how well fed the army was when on the march in England. He tasted roast beef and apple puddings for the first time in

Horsham, Sussex, roast goose for the first time in Thame, Oxfordshire, and was introduced to Yorkshire pudding in Warwick.

Arriving in Birmingham, his training began. Like most country people he could ride but had to be taught how to ride in a military manner. His day began with a trumpet call, at 4.45am in the summer or 6am in the winter. Washing, dressing and folding bedding had to be done within fifteen minutes, after which the ‘stables’ trumpet sounded. The horses were mucked out and then exercised. A breakfast of coffee and bread was provided either before or after training in the riding school, depending on the rota and the degree of training required. Horses were then fed and smartened up. Two hours of foot drill before lunch followed, the horses being fed this time before the men. After the soldiers’ midday meal had been eaten, more foot drill, sword exercises, or both, followed until a short period of free time in the afternoon before 6pm stables roll-call. Final rubbing-down and feeding for the horses finished the soldier’s day, unless he had kit to clean – and most had. After that he was free either to lie on his bed or go into the town; the barracks had no organised recreation facilities and no further meal was provided by the army until breakfast the following day.

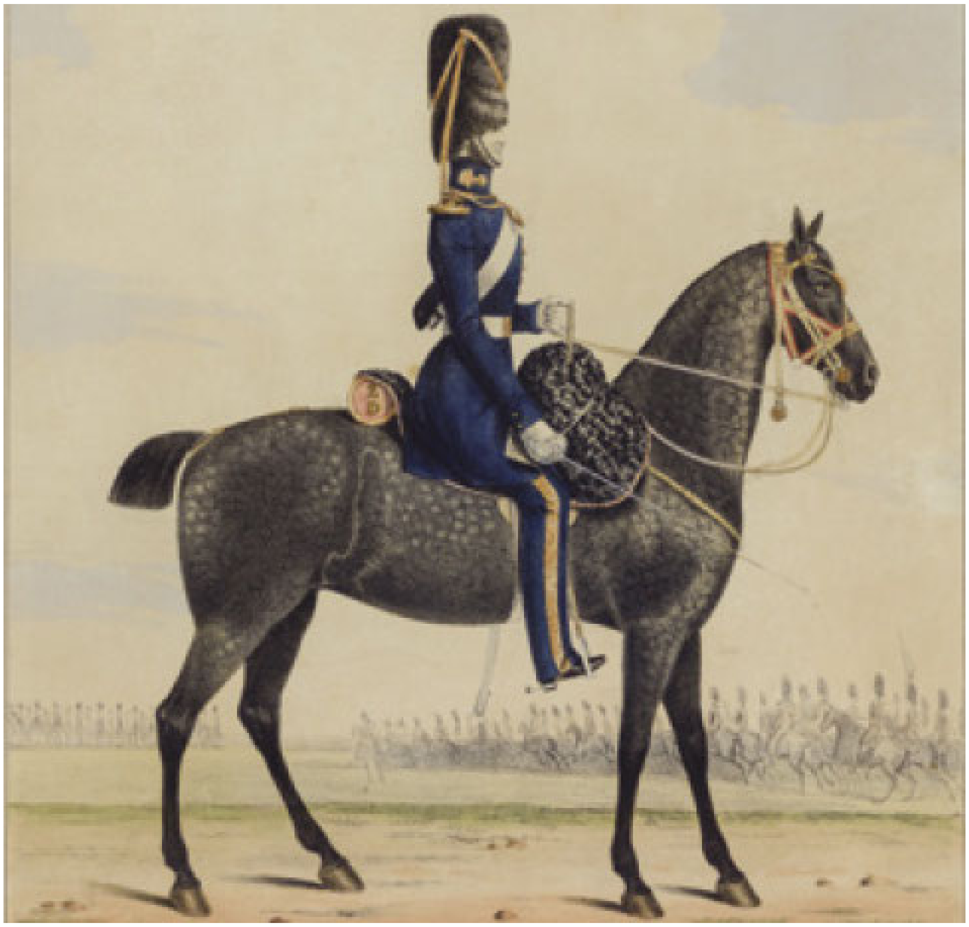
Somerville’s account of the passage through Parliament of the Reform Bill of 1832 is lucidly chronological and indicates clearly how the army was affected by and implicated in most of the stages of its passage. No ordinary soldiers had the vote; most officers – by reason of their background and position – were opposed to Reform. The majority of soldiers came from the same backgrounds as those classes pressing with increasing violence for improved Parliamentary representation, yet the soldiers represented the power of the state. The Duke of Wellington, the most respected soldier in the army and an absolute opponent of Reform, was influential in the House of Lords and was shortly to become prime minister; as a Tory, his motives and intentions were persistently suspected by radical elements in Parliament and by the radical press. The Bill passed the Commons, eventually, in July 1831; it was rejected by the Lords in October. King William IV prorogued Parliament on 20 October and warned that Reform would be reintroduced in the next session. The Bristol riots erupted on 29 October. As political unions were formed throughout industrial areas of Britain, so the army was placed in readiness to deal with the expected revolution: the Greys sharpened swords and had troops saddled and at short notice to move twenty-four hours a day. The Reformers were afraid of the power of the army, whilst the establishment doubted the loyalty of the soldiers; a revolution in France in 1830 had made the government even more jittery than usual. In April 1832 the Bill passed Commons and Lords but failed at the committee stage. The strength and numbers of the political unions grew and Somerville recorded 200,000 people attending a political meeting in Birmingham, 5,000 of which had, the week before, entered the barracks in a show of strength. The barracks were sealed off and orders issued for plans to stop the expected march on London by the Birmingham Political Union.

It was at that point, as a clash between the Greys and political protesters seemed inevitable, that Somerville and other privates of the regiment began to write letters to the press, to the King and to the Duke of Wellington, saying that they would not sabre peaceful citizens seeking to make a non-violent protest. It seems likely that they were not the only soldiers to do this and Somerville maintained that it was only once the establishment realised that the army could no longer be relied upon to support it that the anti-Reformers gave way and allowed the passage of the Bill through the committee stage in May 1832. That the doubtful reliability of the army was one cause of the passage of the Bill was, not surprisingly, denied by the Duke of Wellington. His denial was quoted in the newspaper, The Weekly Dispatch. Reading the denial while on guard but off duty, Somerville wrote a refutation of it which the paper published in part on 27 May 1832. If his words can be believed, his motives and those of some of his comrades were never in doubt.

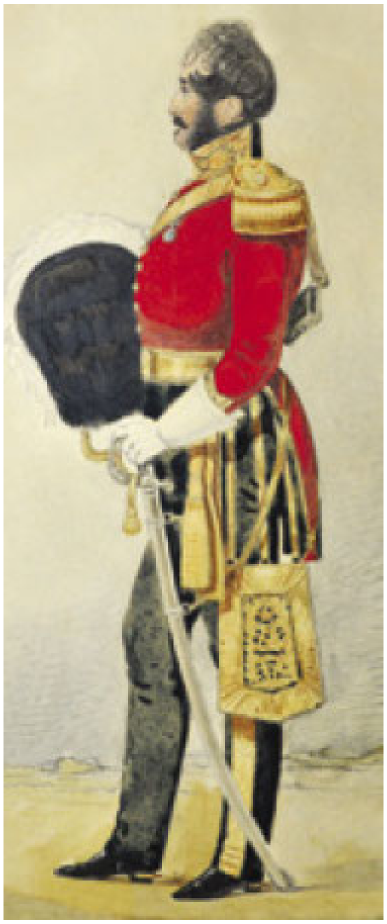
The Scots Greys have honourably secured a high character in the defence of their country, and they would be the last to degrade themselves below the dignity of British soldiers, in acting as the tools of a tyrant.

Whatever his motives, it was clear that as far as the regiment was concerned, Somerville had gone too far and it was inferred by senior officers that a potential state of mutiny existed in the ranks of the Greys. Although all the letters were anonymous, after various regimental

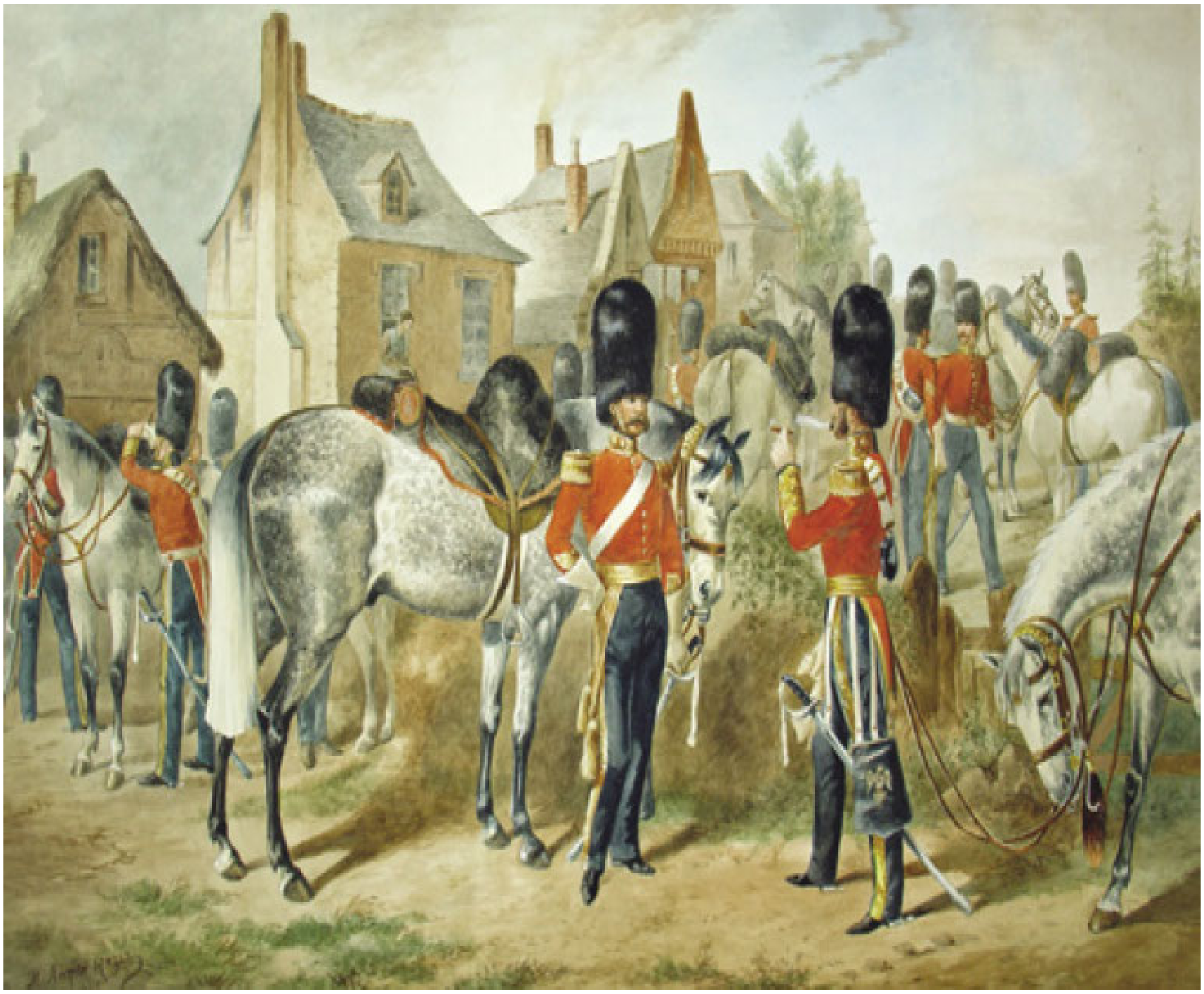
investigations Somerville was accused of writing the letter which substantiated all the other letters and he was brought before the senior major, Charles Wyndham, an officer who had been wounded in the foot at the battle of Waterloo. Wyndham was commanding the Greys in the absence on leave of Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Arthur Hill and, while clearly perturbed that such a promising recruit as Somerville should have become involved in mutiny, he realised that an example had to be made in order to curb dissent. Most accounts of what followed agree that, because writing to a newspaper on regimental matters was not a crime for which he could be sufficiently seriously punished in order to set the necessary example, Somerville was subsequently brought before a regimental court martial on other charges. He was accused of disobedience in the riding school – where he had been ordered to ride an unfamiliar and particularly difficult horse and had dismounted and refused to remount. The sentence of the court martial was that Somerville should be flogged: 200 lashes with the cat-o'-nine-tails. Somerville's account of his flogging is one of the few articulate accounts by a recipient of a military flogging to survive. In the event, the flogging was stopped after 100 lashes to save Somerville's life but his elevation to the position of radical folk hero rapidly followed. The gossip in Birmingham about his flogging was fed by a characteristically lucid letter from Somerville which was published in Birmingham, London and Edinburgh newspapers and 'Somerville of the Greys' became as well-known a popular martyr as Ewart had been a popular hero. The court of enquiry – which the Horse Guards could not avoid, given the frenzied publicity – sat at Weedon, Northamptonshire, in July 1832, having been forced to convene by a petition to the House of Commons. It became clear during the enquiry that Major Wyndham had wished to keep the matter as regimentally private as possible and had acted too rapidly in convening the court martial, passing sentence and implementing it. That he did what appeared to him to be the right thing for the right reasons was accepted and Wyndham was merely reprimanded. Somerville was allowed to purchase his discharge and went on to pursue a career as a radical journalist. Wyndham was eventually promoted and commanded the regiment from 1837 to 1841.



An officer of 2nd Dragoons in Undress; coloured lithograph by L. Mansion and S. Eschauzier, printed by Lefevre and published by Spooner, c. 1835.



Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Wyndham when a major, 2nd Dragoons; watercolour by Richard Dighton, c. 1835–37.

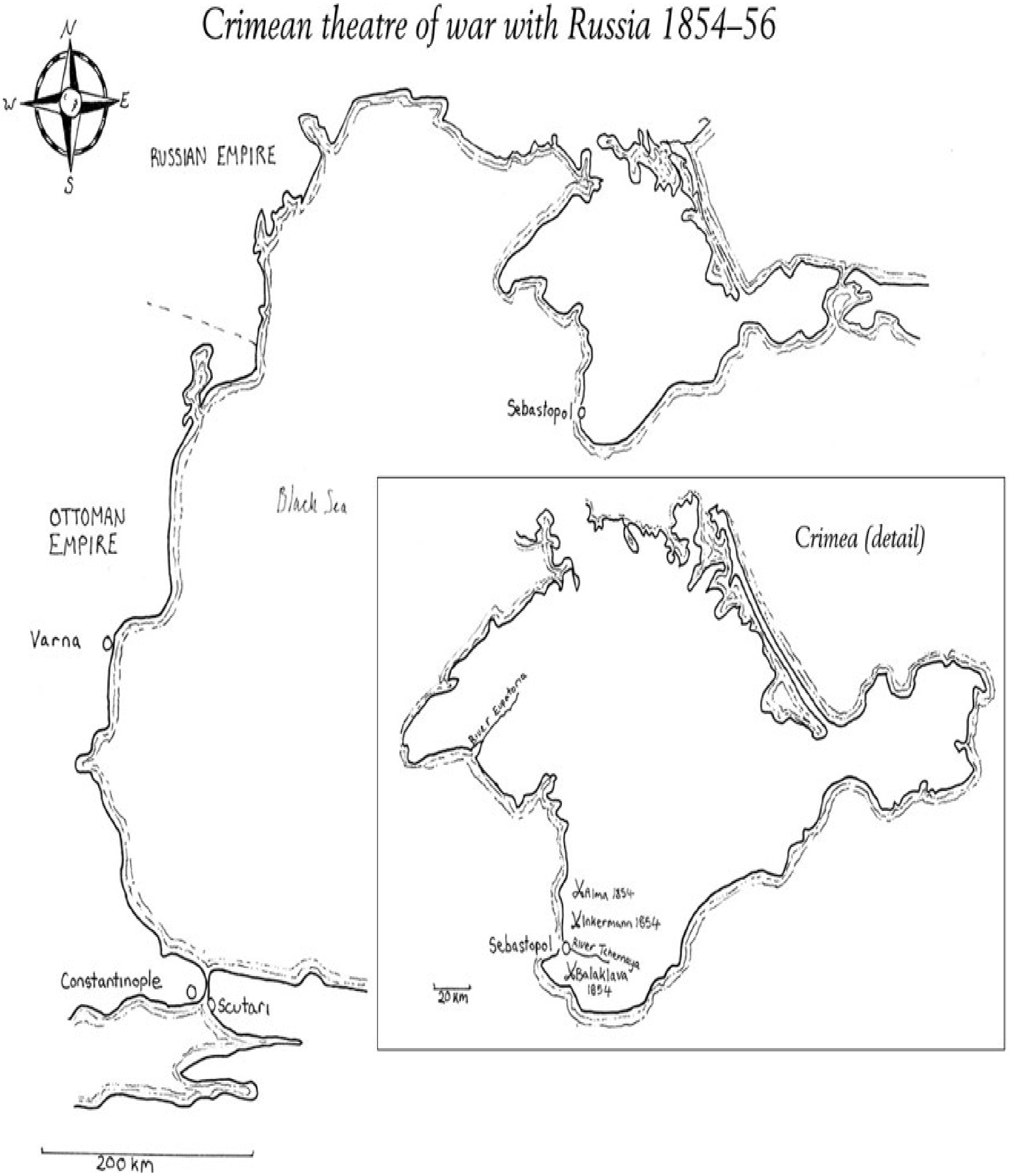


Officers and men of 2nd Dragoons in Ireland, depicting the period 1843–45 during which the regiment wore no plume in its bearskin caps; watercolour by Michael Angelo Hayes, 1845. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

The regiment remained in Birmingham throughout 1832 and into 1833, moving to York in 1834 and then spending the year 1835 in Scotland. After a short period in Leeds in 1836 the regiment was posted to Ireland, where it remained until 1843, returning there in 1846 after two years in England and Scotland. In 1851 the Greys returned to England and in 1853 took part in the ‘camp of exercise’ on Chobham Common. This camp was the first real attempt to teach officers and men about the exigencies of active service, something which none of the dragoon guard or heavy dragoon regiments had experienced since the end of the Napoleonic Wars nearly forty years before. The camp ran from June to August 1853 and the regiment was reviewed by Queen Victoria, who visited Chobham in August. Unfortunately for the troops who formed the vanguard of those sent to the Crimea in 1854, the numerous deficiencies that Chobham had revealed in training and preparedness for the realities of war were exposed too late to be remedied before they were thrust into one.

The regiment was the last regiment of the Heavy Cavalry Brigade to leave England for the Crimea and the first to arrive, its speed being ensured by travel direct from Constantinople (Istanbul) to the Crimea, rather than via Bulgaria. Trumpeter Harry Powell of the 13th Light Dragoons recorded twenty years later in his reminiscences that the Greys landed in the Crimea in September 1854 looking as clean as if they were going to be reviewed in Hyde Park. The battle of the Alma had been fought four days before the Greys set foot on Russian soil, on 20 September 1854, but it had not involved any of the light cavalry regiments which were already there. Victory at the Alma meant that the British and French armies could advance on Sebastopol – which is what happened. Once Sebastopol was besieged, a supply port near at hand was needed, so the port of Balaklava was captured. Once captured, its position on a line of communication was in jeopardy from a regrouped Russian force which had left Sebastopol before the siege in order not to be bottled up. The attempts by the Russians to retake Balaklava led to the battle on 25 October 1854.

Crimean theatre of war with Russia 1854–56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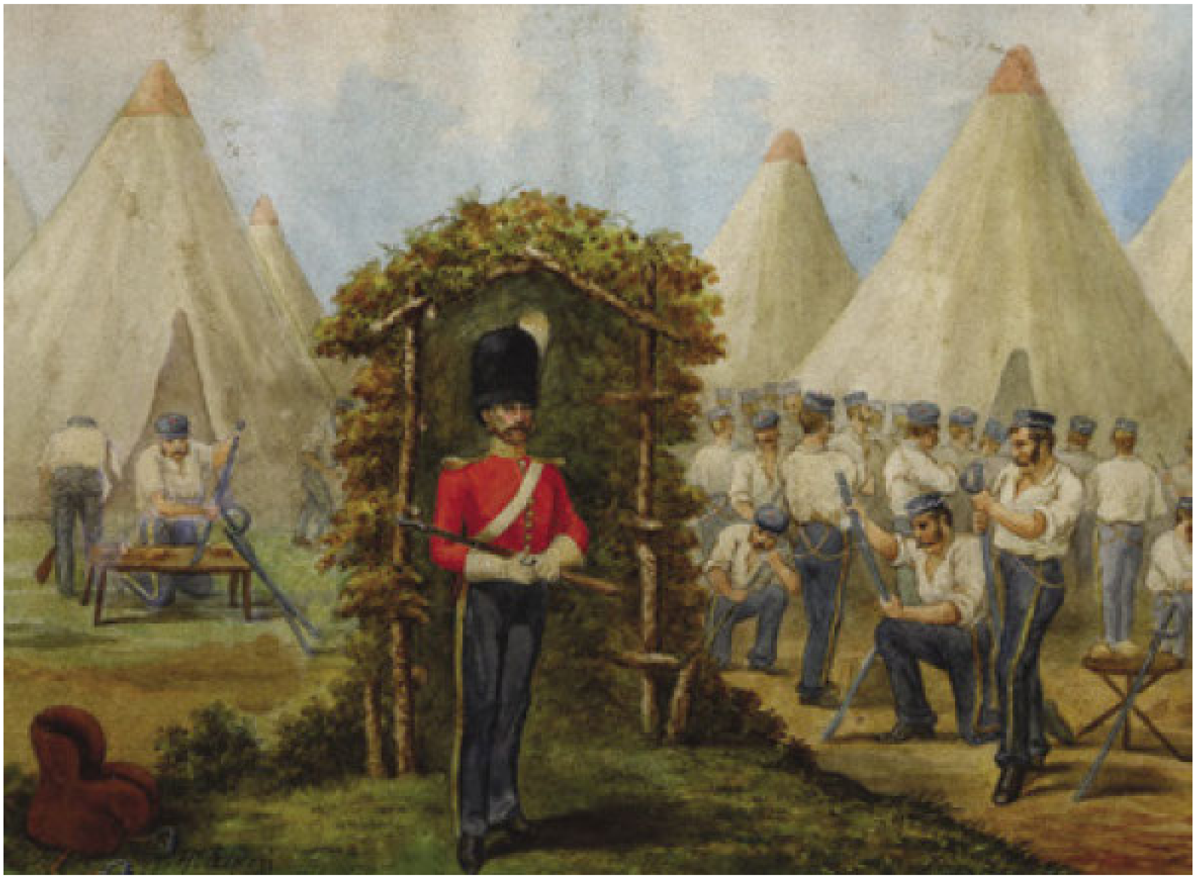
W
E
S
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
Sebastopol
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Black Sea
Varna
Constantinople
Scutari
200 km
Crimea (detail)
River Eupatoria
Alma 1854
Inkermann 1854
Sebastopol
River Tchernaya
Balaklava 1854
20 KM

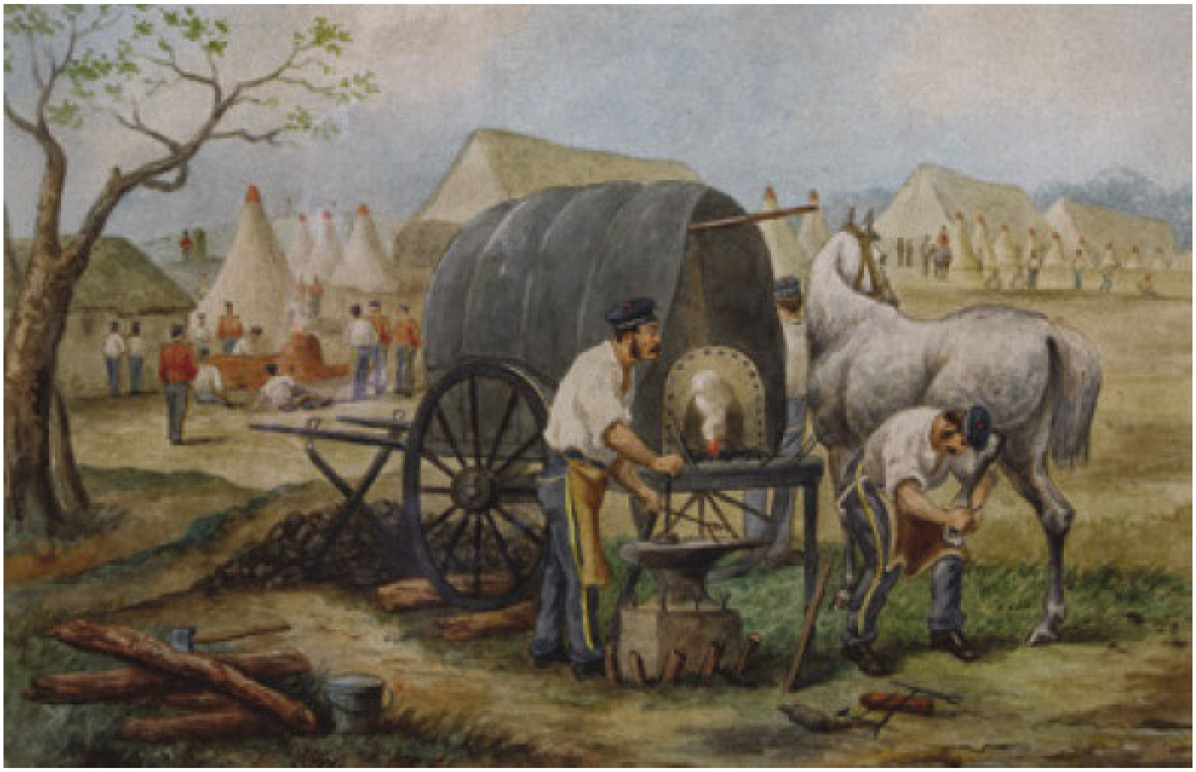
Félix Philippoteaux was a French artist who specialised in military and genre paintings. The Napoleonic campaigns produced many subjects for such artists but, with the French and British alliance against the Russians in the Crimean campaign, French artists also began to produce paintings of British victories.

Philippoteaux's Charge of the Heavy Brigade (1876) is a panoramic view of the Greys charging into the Russian cavalry with the Crimean hills in the background. To the right of centre of the painting can be seen the regimental butcher, still in his blood-spattered apron, in the thick of the charge. This is an example of 'artistic licence': Private John Vahey, 'Butcher Jack', was in fact a 17th Lancer, whose story became well known after the Crimea. A renowned alcoholic, he woke up in gaol, and with a terrible hangover, on the day of the battle. Finding his guard gone and his regiment about to charge with the Light Brigade, he grabbed his axe and charged with them. According to his own account (probably embellished after a few drinks), he 'went stark mad' and brained a Russian gunner.

Bruce Ridge



A private of 2nd Dragoons on sentry in front of his ‘rustic’ shelter; behind him are soldiers of the regiment cleaning their kit following a royal review of the regiment at the Camp of Exercise, Chobham Common, Surrey, August 1854; watercolour in the manner of Henry Alken, c. 1853.



Two farriers of 2nd Dragoons shoeing a horse at the regiment's mobile field forge while, in the background, soldiers of the regiment congregate around a camp kitchen at the Camp of Exercise, Chobham Common, Surrey, August 1854; watercolour in the manner of Henry Alken, c. 1853.

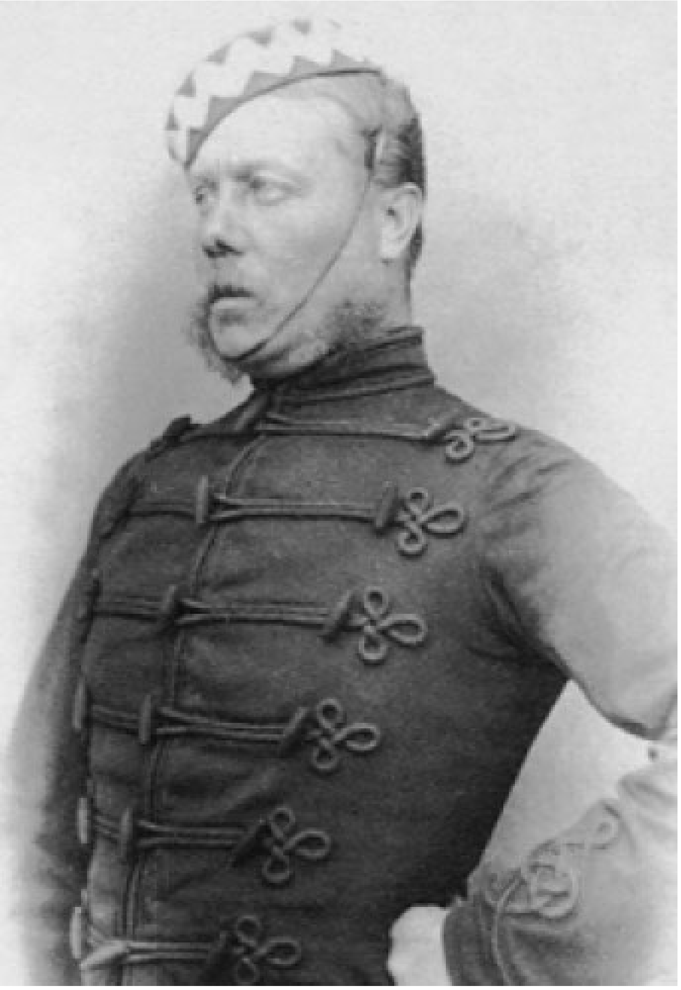
Few battles have inspired such evocative commemoration as that of Balaklava: the 'Thin Red Line', the 'Charge of the Light Brigade', the 'Charge of the Heavy Brigade'. Essentially a cavalry action, for the good reason that the majority of the infantry was besieging Sebastopol, two hours' march away, Balaklava also involved the Royal Horse Artillery, the 93rd Highlanders and quantities of Turkish troops. As an immense Russian force gradually advanced towards Balaklava, pounding and then occupying the outlying redoubts, the cavalry retired before it, being covered by the guns of the Royal Horse Artillery. The principal actions took place on the floors of a series of wide valleys, each of which was flanked by ridges and hills that impeded the views from the valley floors. The extent of this visual impediment was not wholly appreciated by the generals, who saw the action from 600 feet up on the heights at one end of the valleys. Therefore, as the five regiments of the Heavy Brigade advanced eastwards along the north side of the southern valley floor, they were unaware that advancing westwards above them, behind hills and ridges that separated the two parallel valleys, was a vastly superior mass of Russian cavalry. As the Heavy Brigade halted, so the Russians began, coincidentally it appears, to wheel left – neither side being aware of the other's existence. The opposing forces' first sight of each other seems to have come as a mutual surprise and a few moments were spent in manoeuvring for the inevitable clash.

The Russians extended their line to their left; the Heavies wheeled left into line, closed and dressed ranks and, uphill, charged. The Russians made no use of their superior position on a downward slope but received the charge motionless, having halted their downward advance to fire their carbines, one shot from which slightly wounded the Greys' Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Darby-Griffith. The Heavies' commander, Brigadier The Honourable James Scarlett, led the front rank of the brigade, formed of the Greys and most of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, straight into the centre of the Russian horsemen, whose flanking squadrons extended to encircle the British. As the Russian pincer closed, so the 5th Dragoon Guards slammed into them on the Greys' left and the first squadron of the Inniskillings executed a similar manoeuvre on the right; the pincer had closed too soon. The remaining regiments of the brigade, the 4th Dragoon Guards and 1st Royal Dragoons, arrived after the melee was joined and contributed to the gradual collapse and retreat of the Russian cavalry.

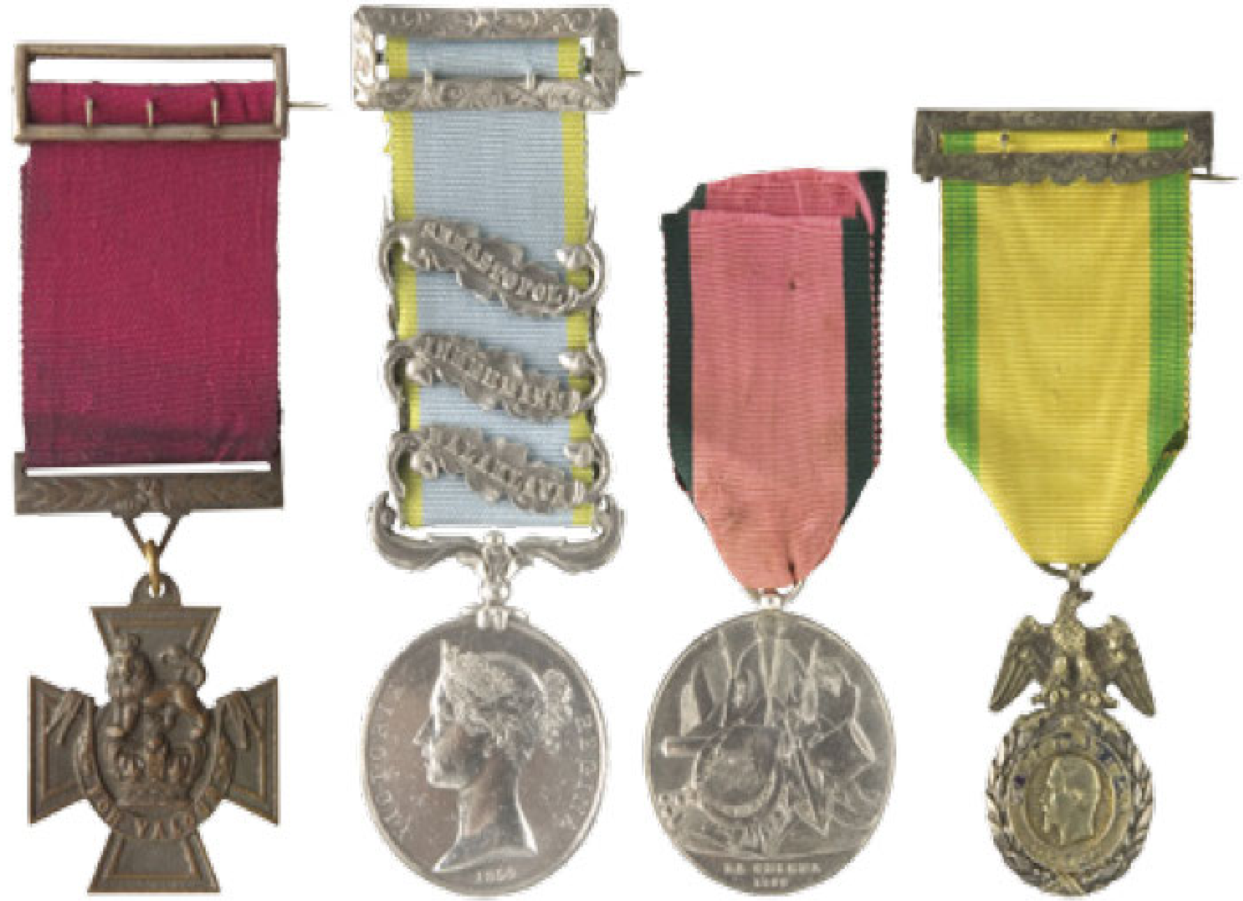
John Grieve was born on 3 May 1821 in Musselburgh, East Lothian. He had risen to the rank of serjeant-major (the spelling then in use) by the time of the battle and he was in the thick of it. His citation reads:

Saved the life of an Officer in the Heavy Cavalry Charge at Balaklava, who was surrounded by Russian cavalry, by his gallant conduct in riding up to his rescue and cutting off the head of one Russian, disabling and dispersing the others.

Grieve was decorated by Queen Victoria at a parade in Hyde Park, London, on 26 June 1857. This was the first presentation of Victoria Crosses and, as the 2nd Dragoons were the senior regiment represented, Grieve became the first man in the army to receive the award. He was commissioned as a cornet, without purchase, in December that year and was made Adjutant of the regiment in February 1859. He was later promoted, but sold his lieutenant's commission in 1865. John Grieve died on 1 December 1873 aged fifty-two. He is buried in the Inveresk Cemetery by St Michael's Church, Musselburgh. In 1936 John Grieve Oliver presented his uncle's medals to the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

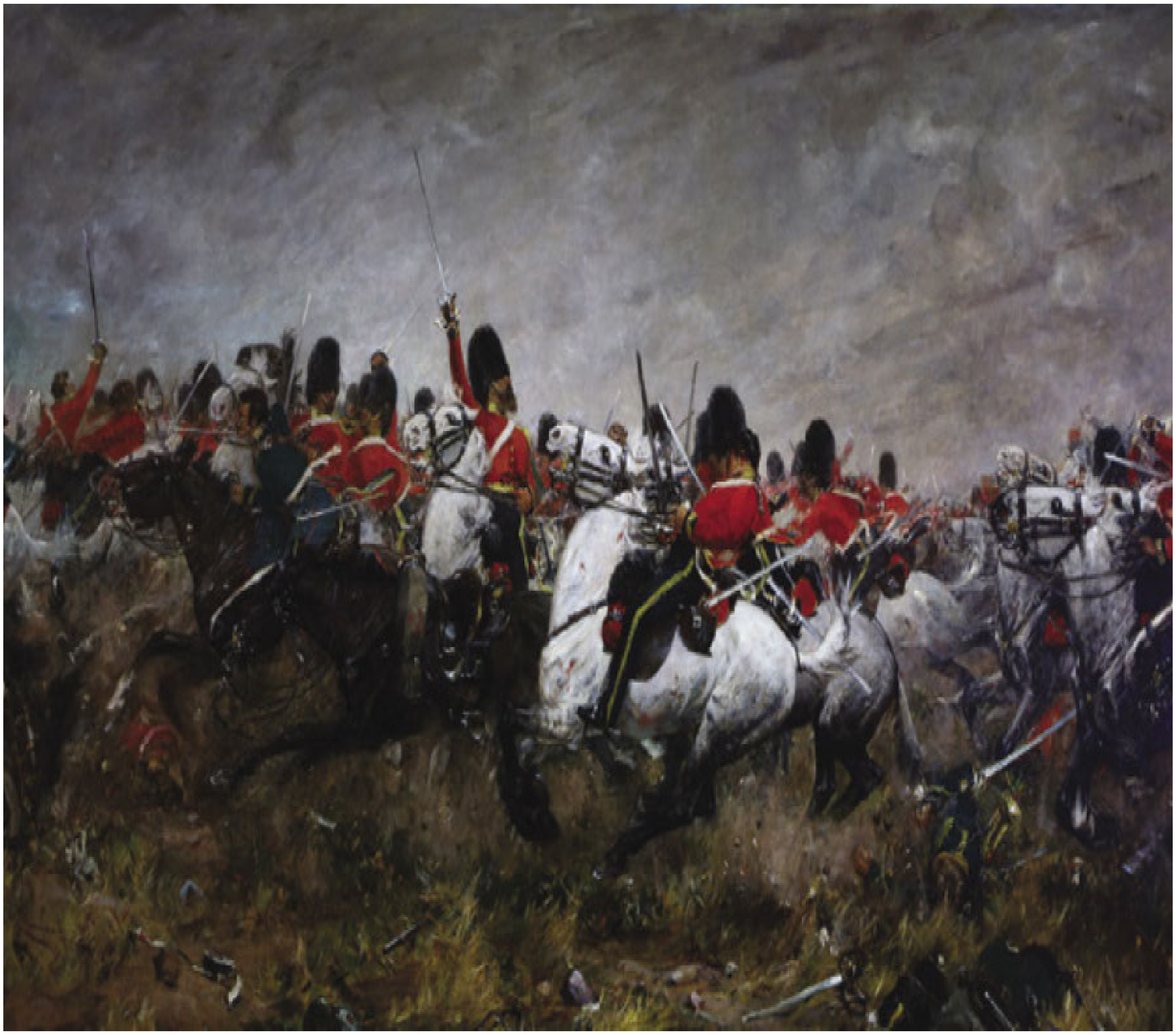


John Grieve VC as lieutenant and Adjutant, c.1860.



The medals of Serjeant-Major John Grieve: VC, British Crimea Medal with three clasps (Balaklava, Inkermann and Sebastopol), Turkish Crimea Medal, French Médaille Militaire. (Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide)

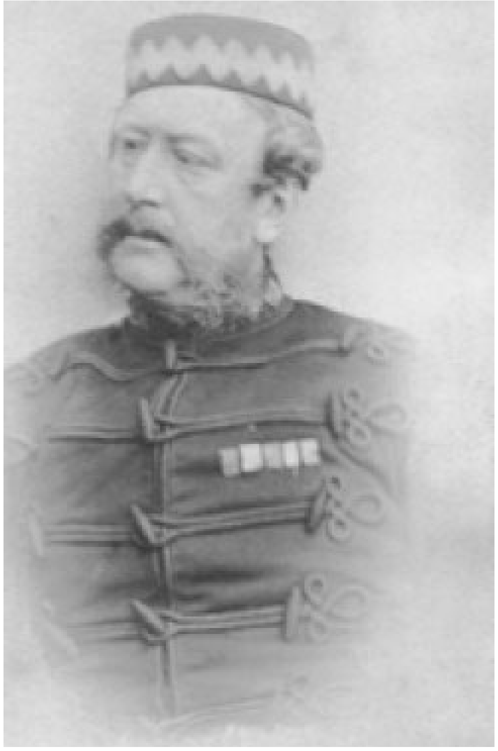
Rally the Greys (1895) depicts the moment when the Greys, having charged at short notice with General Scarlett's Heavy Brigade, were in danger of becoming dispersed. The Adjutant (Lieutenant William Millar, the central bearded figure) became aware of the danger and stood in his stirrups, crying out, 'Rally the Greys!' Those that could do so fought their way towards him and, once they were formed up, charged again. Despite the tremendous fighting, only two men from the Greys died during the charge.



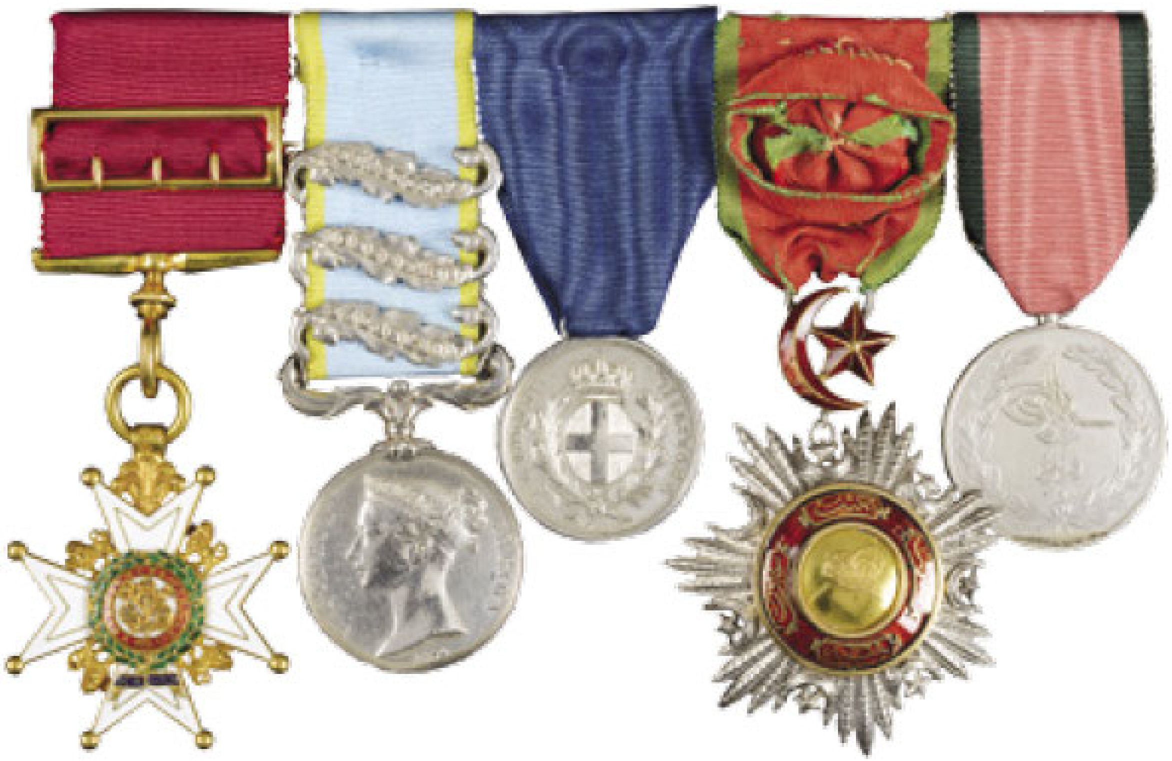
Allan Stewart, one of the leading military artists during the late-Victorian peak of battle paintings, demonstrates in his work enormous

attention to detail in the uniforms and weapons used and concentrates on the human aspect of war. Before painting Rally the Greys he spoke to many veterans in Edinburgh who had fought in the battle; one even lent him a rare shell jacket, worn during the charge. He also made use of photographs of officers and studied letters written from the Crimea.

Bruce Ridge



A photograph of Henry Darby-Griffith as Lieutenant-Colonel commanding 2nd Dragoons, c. 1860. After eleven years' service as an infantry officer, Darby-Griffith (1810–1887) exchanged into 2nd Dragoons in 1839 as a captain. He commanded the regiment 1852–66 and died a general and Colonel of 5th Lancers.



The orders and medals of Henry Darby-Griffith: CB, the British Crimea Medal, the silver medal Al Valore Militare of the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Badge of the Turkish Order of the Medjudie, 4th class, and the Turkish Crimea Medal. (© National Museums Scotland)

Once the two masses were joined there was little use of firearms, most of which would have been single-shot pistols or carbines. This was essentially a sword-to-sword engagement and, given the ineffective nature of the weapons used on both sides, actual deaths were few among the British, although horrific injuries were received. Cutting, chopping and slashing – with little room to use the thrust – the Greys milled about, each man fighting his own opponent. The shock effect of the charge gradually dissipated but the advantage of height gradually began to tell: on average the Heavies were taller, when mounted, than their Russian adversaries. As the Russians faltered and fell back, so a troop of Royal Horse Artillery deployed on their flank and fired shells from their light howitzers, thus completing the Russians' defeat.

Hand-coloured photograph of Private William Connell DCM, 2nd Dragoons. Connell served in the Crimea 1–25 October 1854, being wounded at Balaklava – for which action he was recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal – and then invalided home. The photograph shows him wearing his DCM, together with the British and Turkish Crimea Medals 1854–56. After his military service, Connell joined the Great Western Railway.

Later on the morning of 25 October 1854, the Heavy Brigade was again ordered into action to cover the retreat of the shattered Light Brigade from its own charge. This time, the Heavies’ casualties from musketry and artillery fire were considerable, the Greys suffering many more of these than it had done earlier in the day.

Two Victoria Crosses were later awarded to men of the Greys who distinguished themselves at Balaklava: to Serjeant-Major John Grieve, for saving an officer's life, and to Private Henry Ramage, for rescuing three of his comrades, two of whom were wounded and one of whom was a prisoner.

The cavalry was little used in the campaign after Balaklava and the appalling Crimean winter of 1854–55 finished off the carnage begun in those battles. The Greys returned home from the Crimea in July 1856 to another long period of peace in Europe.

Henry Ramage was born in Morningside, Edinburgh, in 1827. He was a private in the 2nd Dragoons at the time of the battle. His citation reads:

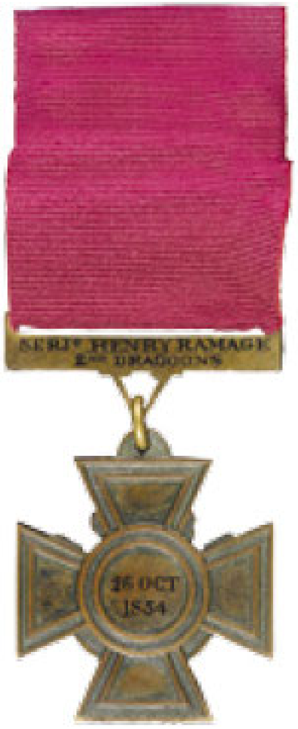
For having, at the battle of Balaklava, galloped out to the assistance of Private McPherson, of the same Regiment, on perceiving him surrounded by seven Russians, when by his gallantry he dispersed the enemy, and saved his comrade's life.

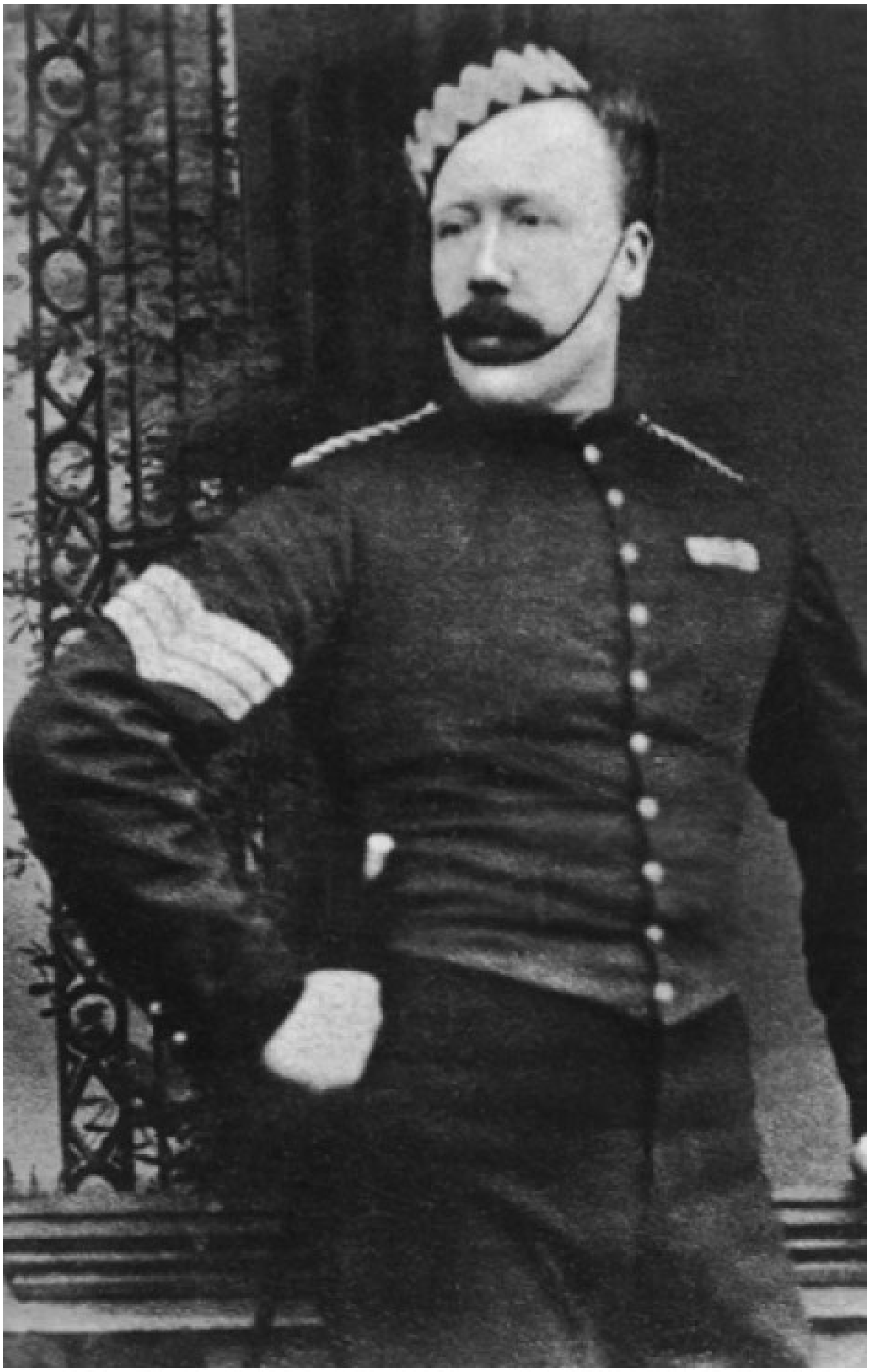
For having, on the same day, when the Heavy Brigade was rallying, and the enemy retiring, finding his horse would not leave the ranks, dismounted and brought in a prisoner from the Russian lines.

Also for having dismounted on the same day, when the Heavy Brigade was covering the retreat of the Light Cavalry, and lifted from his horse Private Gardiner, who was disabled from a severe fracture of the leg by round shot, Serjeant Ramage then carried him to the rear from under very heavy cross fire, thereby saving his life, the spot where he must inevitably have fallen having been immediately afterwards covered by the Russian cavalry.

Serjeant Ramage received his VC from Queen Victoria at a parade on Southsea Common in August 1858. His recommendation was among a small number that were not gazetted until 1858 and two of which show the date of the action as 26 October. He is referred to as ‘Serjeant’ but at the time of the battle he was still a private, which makes his actions all the more admirable. One of the soldiers he rescued, Private Gardiner, had two brothers in the regiment, and was the son of Troop Serjeant-Major Alexander Gardiner who, as a corporal, had been wounded at Waterloo. Henry Ramage died in 1861 while serving in Ireland with the Greys and is buried in Newbridge Cemetery, County Kildare. Sadly the grave is unmarked and relevant paperwork appears to have been destroyed in 1922 during the civil war. His Victoria Cross is in the possession of the regiment.

John Ross

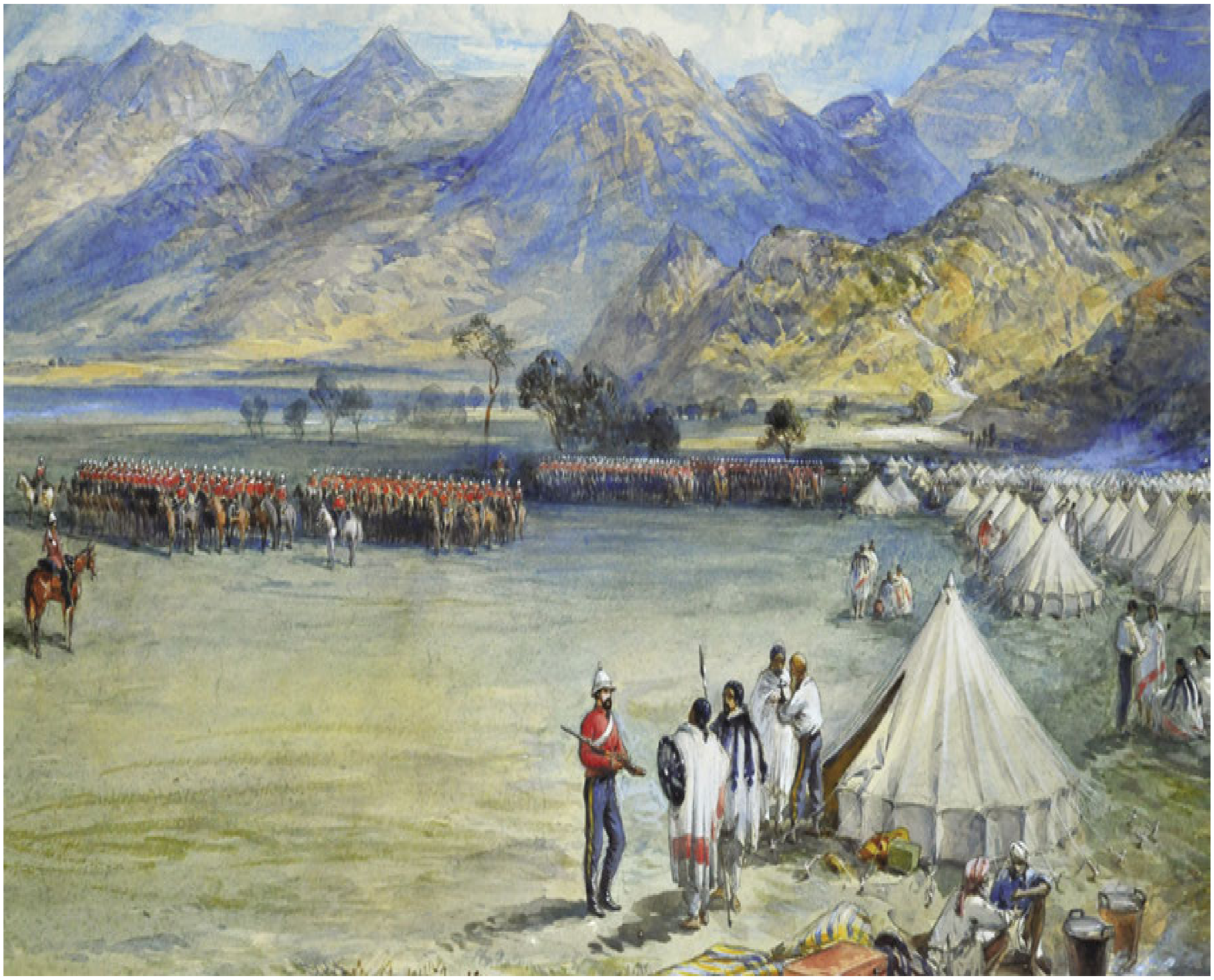




Serjeant Henry Ramage VC and the reverse of his Victoria Cross.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER FOUR



3rd Dragoon Guards in Abyssinia, 1868; watercolour by William Simpson, 1868.

3RD DRAGOON GUARDS

Rather less than a year after the soldiers had returned from the Crimea in 1856, another panic galvanised the governments of Britain and India into military action: the Indian Mutiny. Like most cataclysmic events affecting large numbers of people and involving a potent mixture of religion, politics, personal ambition, money and racial tension, the

causes of the Mutiny were far from simple and certainly not immediate or short-term. The term ‘Indian Mutiny’ was used by the British for more than a century afterwards to describe the events in India in 1857–58 but today they are known to scholars by a number of different terms. Since the Mutiny was confined to a great many, but not all, units of the East India Company’s Bengal Army, it might more accurately be described as the ‘Mutiny of the Bengal Army’, although some Indian rulers sought to take advantage of British discomfiture and Russian agents were also involved.

Through the East India Company, established in England in 1600, Britain had assumed an increasing presence in India following the acquisition of Bombay by the Crown in 1661 as part of the dowry of Catherine of Bragança, queen to King Charles II. This presence was initially limited to trading posts on the coast and was commercial and not political in nature, although tensions gradually grew in the subcontinent between Britain and other European powers, such as France, which had sought to extend their influence at the expense of the British. By the end of the Seven Years War of 1756–63 the French had been almost completely ejected from the subcontinent by a combination of British and East India Company armies; and later campaigns in the 1780s and 1790s had firmly established Britain’s military and political presence in India alongside her lucrative commercial one. Small wars, sometimes of conquest but also of defence, continued during the first two decades of the 19th century but serious territorial acquisition did not begin until the 1840s, when Britain achieved a small degree of hard-won influence in Afghanistan and the territories of Sind and the Punjab in the north-west of the subcontinent.

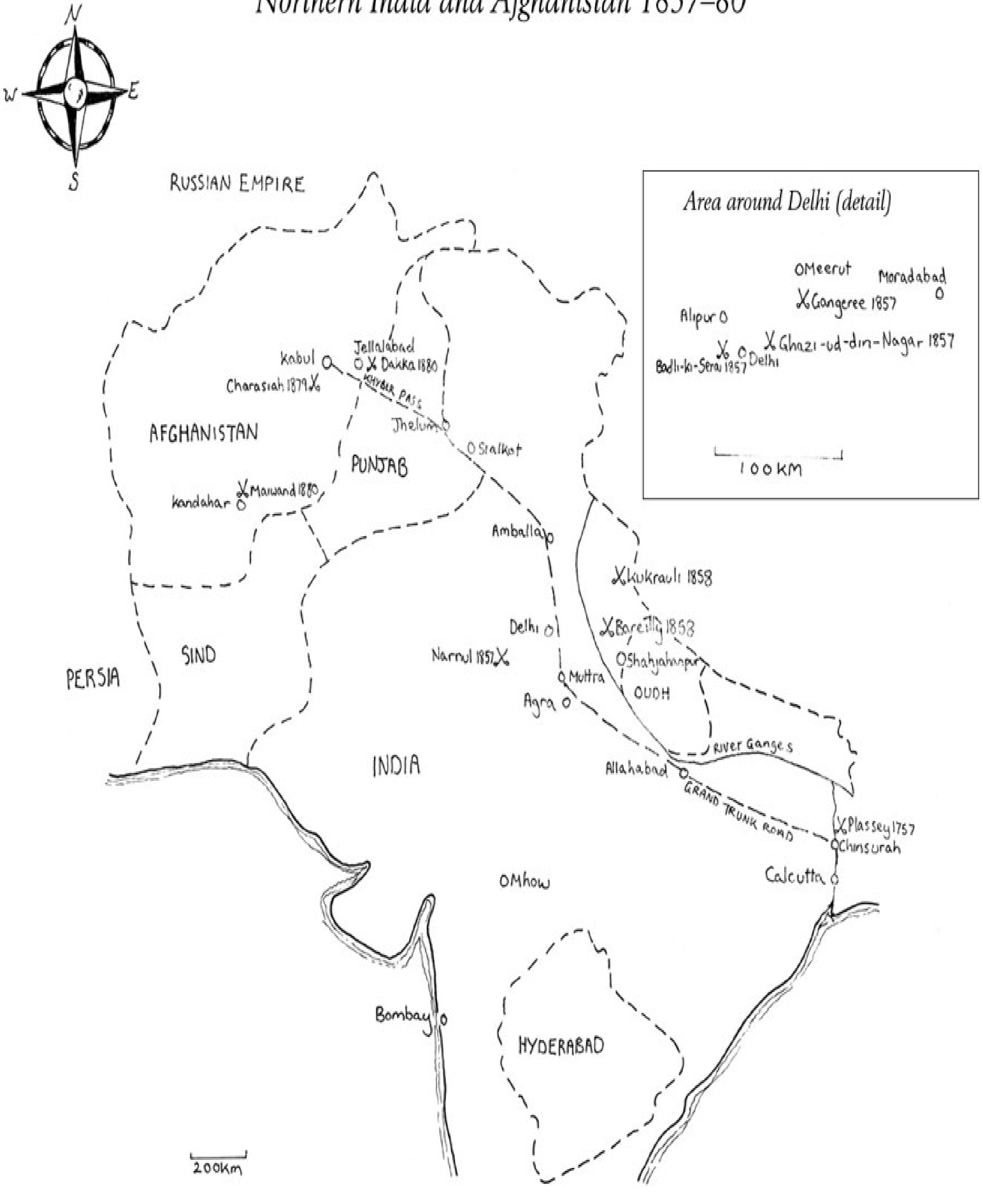
From the 1840s, the mood in Britain and in governmental circles in India was beginning to change in relation to India: a belief grew among the British that they knew better than the Indians about managing things in India and so the flavour of the Indian experience began to change, gradually but irreparably. No longer was there a close and friendly link between Briton and Indian in running Indian affairs for mutual benefit; rather – and imperceptibly at first – a master and servant relationship was allowed to develop. As the number of evangelical Christian missionaries in India was allowed, almost encouraged, to increase, so did the number of civil administrators and, from the 1840s, the number of memsahibs.

For more than fifty years prior to the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, the regiments of the East India Company's armies had been largely officered by Britons, or Anglo-Indians, who had devoted their lives to their regiments and their men, learning their languages and studying their cultures. Gradually, in the last decade before the explosion of wrath that became the Mutiny, this changed. The new breed of officer was no longer interested and tolerant; increasingly, they were distant, arrogant and ignorant.

In 1856, the East India Company's annexation of the kingdom of Oudh (now Awadh), whose ruler was senile and believed by the Company to be corrupt, convinced many rulers of small independent Indian states that their turn for annexation would come – and they were probably right. In the same year, the Governor-General of India announced that Indian troops would be liable for service overseas; for Hindus, to cross the sea meant losing caste. Evangelical Christianity was on the march too, inevitably convincing Hindu and Muslim alike that their faith was under threat. Muslims dreamt of a reborn ruling Muslim dynasty with the restoration of the Moghuls.

Lastly, rumour and legend combined with military opportunity. The rumour spread among the Indian soldiers that a new cartridge was to be issued for the 1853 pattern Enfield rifle-musket and that this cartridge would be lubricated with tallow made from pig and cow fat. The soldiers would be required not only to handle the new cartridges but also, as part of the musket's loading procedure, to insert them into their mouths in order to extract the lead bullet from the lubricated paper cartridge containing the gunpowder. Since pigs are unclean to Muslims and cows sacred to Hindus, it was felt by the native soldiers that this was a deliberate attempt by the British to undermine their religious faiths. The legend in India was that one hundred years after the battle of Plassey (1757), as a result of which the French had been effectively driven from India, the British would follow them. The military opportunity occurred because the Crimean War had necessitated the removal of British troops from India and the number of Indian soldiers had had to be increased in consequence. At the same time, the hitherto invincible reputation of the British troops in the eyes of many Indians – already somewhat damaged by British reverses during the First Afghan War of 1839–42 – was more seriously weakened by stories of further British military failures during the Crimean War, stories that were exaggerated and spread in India by Russian agents.

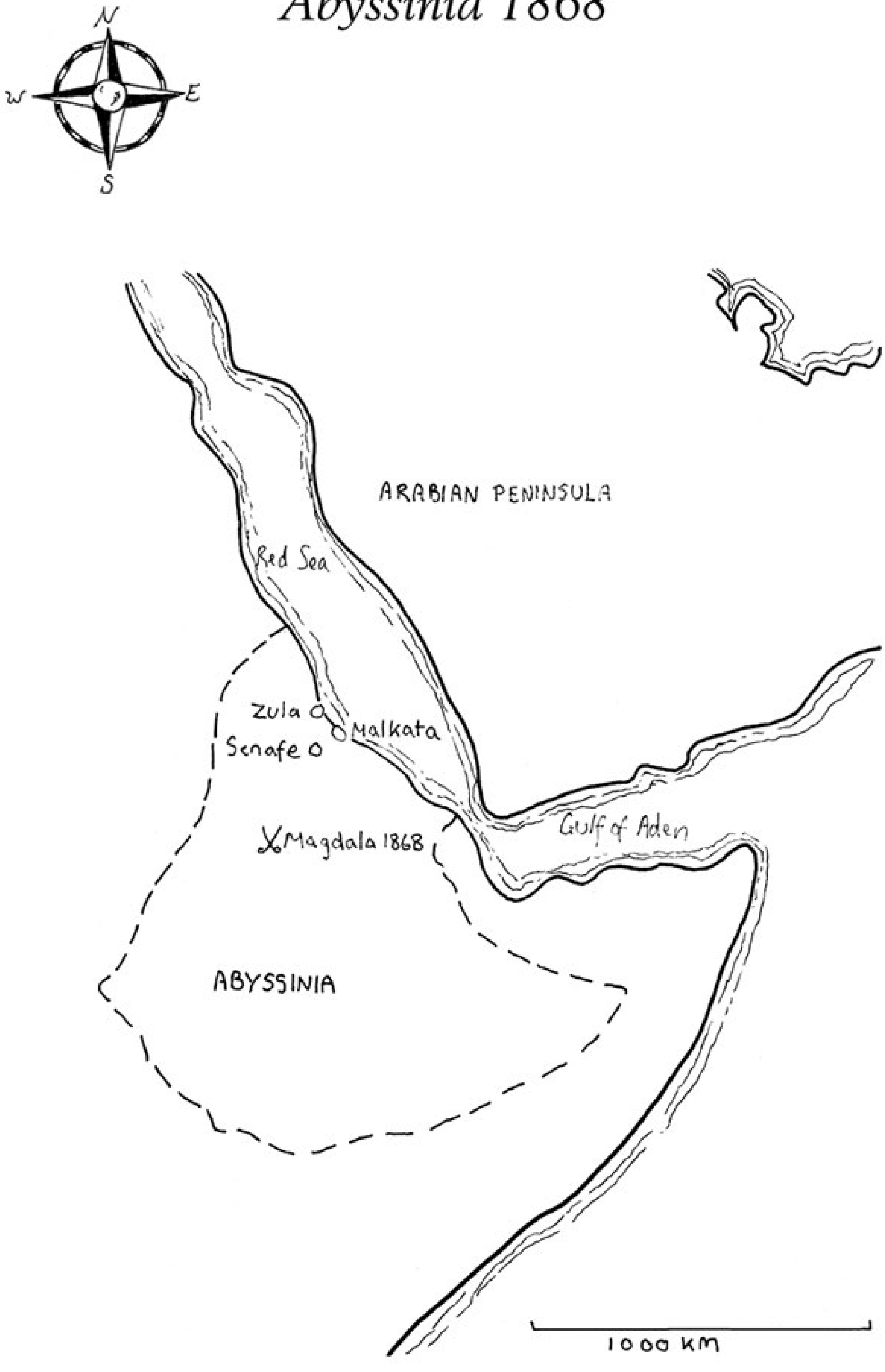
Northern India and Afghanistan 1857–80


N
W
E
S
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
Area around Delhi (detail)
Meerut
Moradabad
Gangeree 1857
Alipur
Ghazi-ud-din-Nagar 1857
Badli-ki-Serai 1857
Delhi
100KM
Kabul
Jellalabad
Dakka 1880
Charasiah 1879
KHYBER PASS
Jhelum
Sialkot
AFGHANISTAN
PUNJAB
Kandahar
Maiwand 1880
Amballa
Kukrauli 1858
Delhi
Bareilly 1858
Narnul 1857
Shahjahanpur
SIND
PERSIA
Muttra
OUDH
Agra
River Ganges
INDIA
Allahabad
GRAND TRUNK ROAD
Plassey 1757
Chinsurah
Calcutta
Mhow
Bombay
HYDERABAD
200km

Indicative of the supreme insensitivity to Indian affairs which had developed gradually in Britain and among Britons in India from the late 1830s was the fact that the outbreak of the Mutiny came as a complete shock to the British. Complacent in their paternal self-righteousness, they were first shocked, then hurt and then very angry. Much of the suppression of the Mutiny was less a series of military operations than a crusade by Anglo-Saxons against their perceptions of the forces of darkness and depravity: the vigour of the British troops in hunting out and despatching mutineers was fuelled by frequently unquestioned, and often sadly true, horror stories of massacre, rape, torture and mutilation of their compatriots.

Britain's economic strength was closely linked to her possession of India. She could have afforded, except perhaps in terms of national prestige, to have lost the Crimean War; she could not afford to lose India. Consequently, when news was received of the outbreak of a mutiny among units of the Bengal Army in the spring of 1857, reinforcements were rushed out by the quickest means to prop up forces in the presidencies of Bombay and Madras, which had not yet burst into flames. The 3rd Dragoon Guards sailed for India in August 1857, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Dyson, the riding master, Lieutenant William Blenkinsop, and four sergeants preceding the regiment by the overland route in order to secure and train sufficient horses for the 3rd on its arrival. The regiment, adequately mounted, was separated by troop or half-troop after arrival in Bombay and formed part of the Central India Field Force commanded by General Sir Hugh Rose, later Field Marshal Lord Strathnairn, which mopped up the few mutineers in central India and prevented large numbers of those fleeing from recriminations in the north, where the Mutiny had been centred, from reaching the asylum offered in the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad. By the end of the campaign the regiment was based in Mhow, with one wing at Ahmednagar.

Abyssinia 1868


N
W
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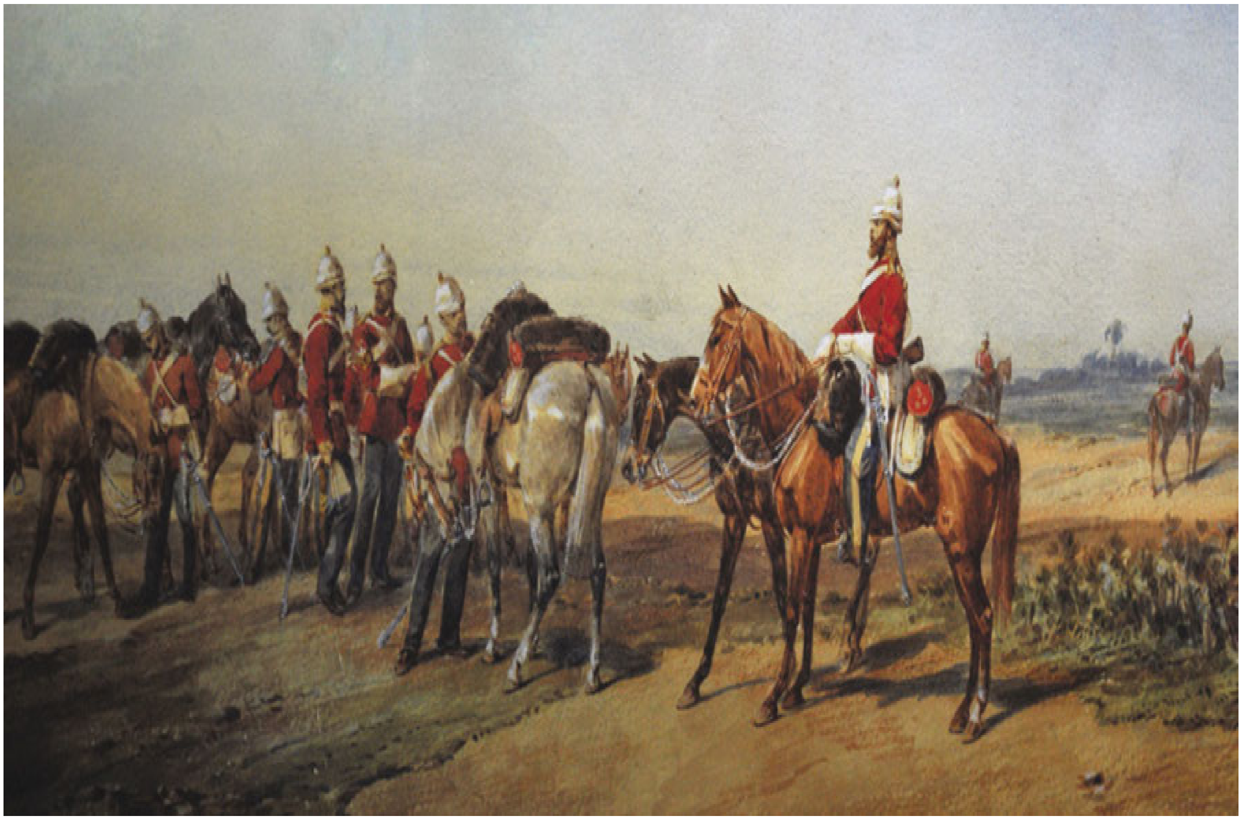
S
ARABIAN PENINSULA
Red Sea
Zula
Malkata
Senafe
Magdala 1868
Gulf of Aden
ABYSSINIA
1000 KM

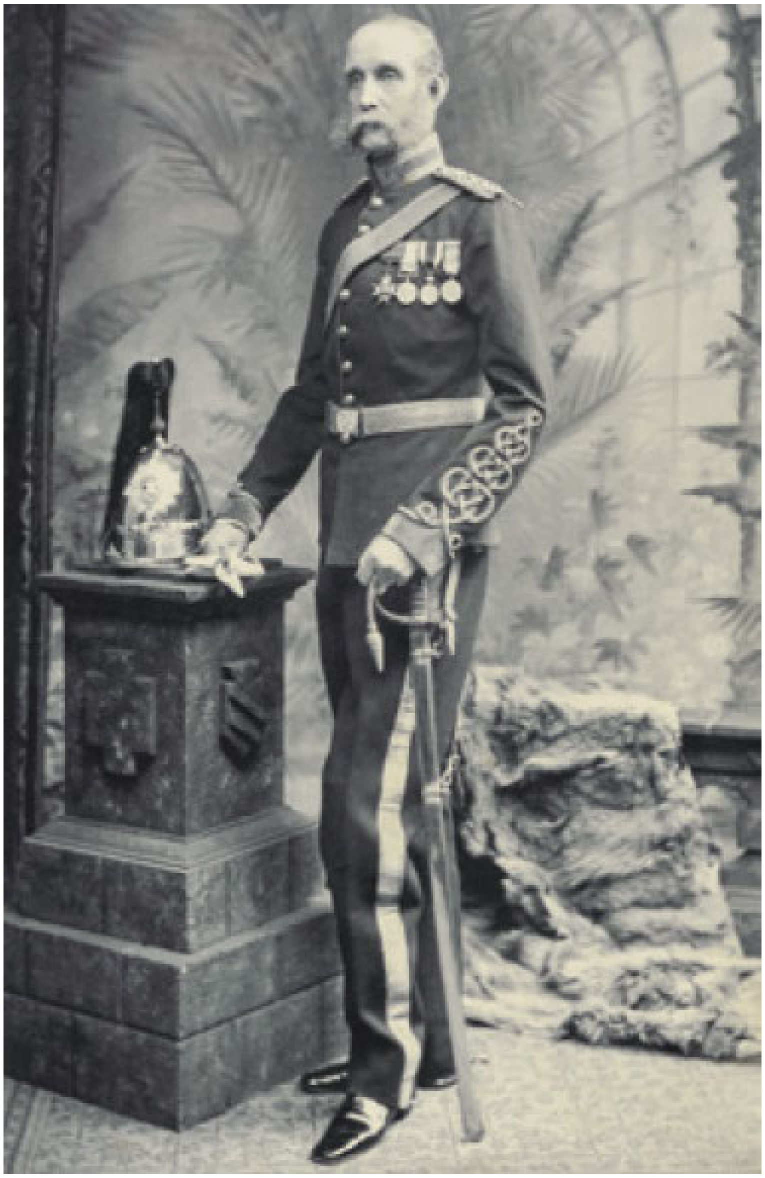


A troop of 3rd Dragoon Guards halted, probably in India in the 1860s or in Abyssinia, 1868. The troop commander is shown talking to the troop sergeant-major, while an orderly holds the officer's horse and the officer's trumpeter attends to his mount, a grey; watercolour by Orlando Norie, c. 1870.

The next decade was spent in the presidency of Bombay – in the west and north-west of the subcontinent – where the regiment became acclimatised. Postings to India, because of the travelling time – three months or more – and the trauma involved, were frequently as long in the 19th century as postings in the late 20th century were for armoured regiments to Germany – as much as twenty years. Home leave was only rarely an option for the soldiers but officers would receive furlough for several months every few years. In the years following the Mutiny it became apparent that India had changed and, while the Indian army developed its own style to an extent that would have been unthinkable to the Company’s regiments, the two communities of Britons and Indians remained irretrievably separate.

The second half of the 19th century was one of unmitigated imperial expansion for Britain; one of new territories, wider still and wider possessions, of gunboat diplomacy and of a concentration on imperial affairs to the almost total exclusion of those developing in Europe.

The campaign in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) during 1867–68 was one of the few that did not involve the acquisition of new territories for Britain. More of a relief expedition than a campaign, its intention was to rescue European hostages held captive by the reportedly demented Emperor of Abyssinia, Theodore III. Negotiations with Theodore had been protracted, and increasingly difficult, since 1864 and eventually the government in London decided that an armed expedition was the only answer. The troops located most closely to Abyssinia were those of the Bombay Army, commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Napier GCB, a veteran of campaigns in India and China since 1845. Napier decided upon a landing on the coast that Abyssinia then had with the Red Sea, followed by a march inland. He divided his available force into three brigades, placing the right wing of the 3rd Dragoon Guards in the third brigade, together with two Indian cavalry and five Indian infantry regiments and the 26th Regiment of Foot (Cameronians).



Lieutenant-General Conyers Tower CB as Colonel of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, c. 1895. Having begun his military career in 1844 with 6th Dragoons – with whom he participated in the charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaklava – Tower transferred to 3rd Dragoon Guards in 1857, commanded the regiment 1863–74 and took it to Abyssinia in 1868. He was Colonel of the Regiment 1891–1903.

The third brigade arrived in Abyssinia in March 1868, by which time Napier and the advance guard had penetrated more than 200 miles into the interior, towards the plateau fortress of Magdala where the hostages were held and the Abyssinian army massed. The right wing of the regiment was formed of three troops, consisting of 204 officers and men, 224 horses and 257 Indian servants. Rapidity of movement and security of the lines of communication were essential; no one could ensure that the hostages would not be killed. The entire trek was through country with a hostile climate and through the lands of Abyssinian princes whose degree of neutrality was only temporarily assured by bags of gold coins. The regiment took twenty-nine days to cover the 400 miles to Magdala and caught up with Napier and his assault force as it was planning to attack the fortress. Only 173 soldiers of the regiment were present at the assault.

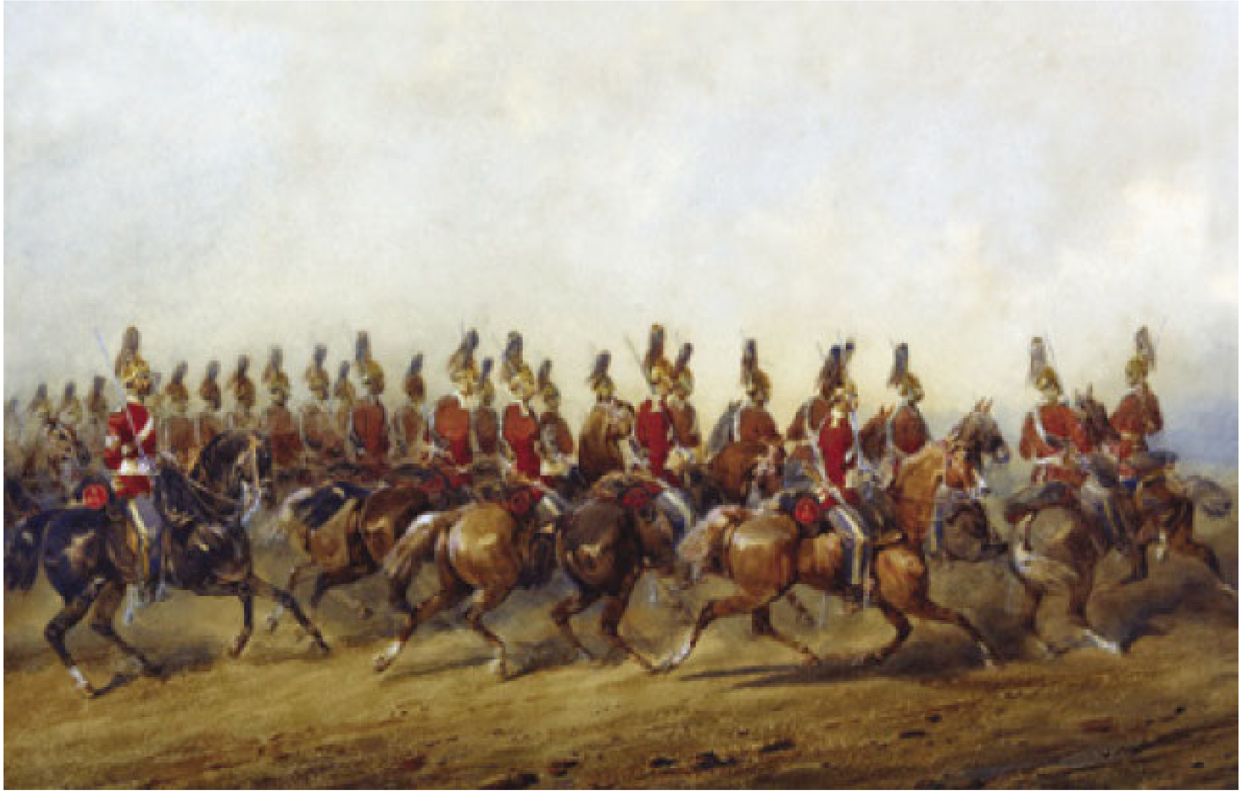
Aside from its swords and the officers' pistols, the regiment was armed for the campaign with the Snider carbine: a single-shot, breech-loading firearm firing a .577-inch calibre lead bullet from a brass cartridge. The Snider was a new weapon and the regiment was one of the first to be armed with it. The value of a type of service dress had been recognised as early as the late 1840s in India and had been widely used, in a variety of nonuniform styles, during the Indian Mutiny. It would become increasingly employed as campaigns in hot climates continued and its colour, 'khaki' (derived from the Persian word khāk, meaning dust or earth), would eventually become as inextricably associated with the British soldier as scarlet had once been.

The section of a silver drum – banded in silver gilt, supported on a leather shield and embellished all over with silver – that was captured by British forces in Abyssinia in 1868 and allocated to 3rd Dragoon Guards at the end of the campaign.

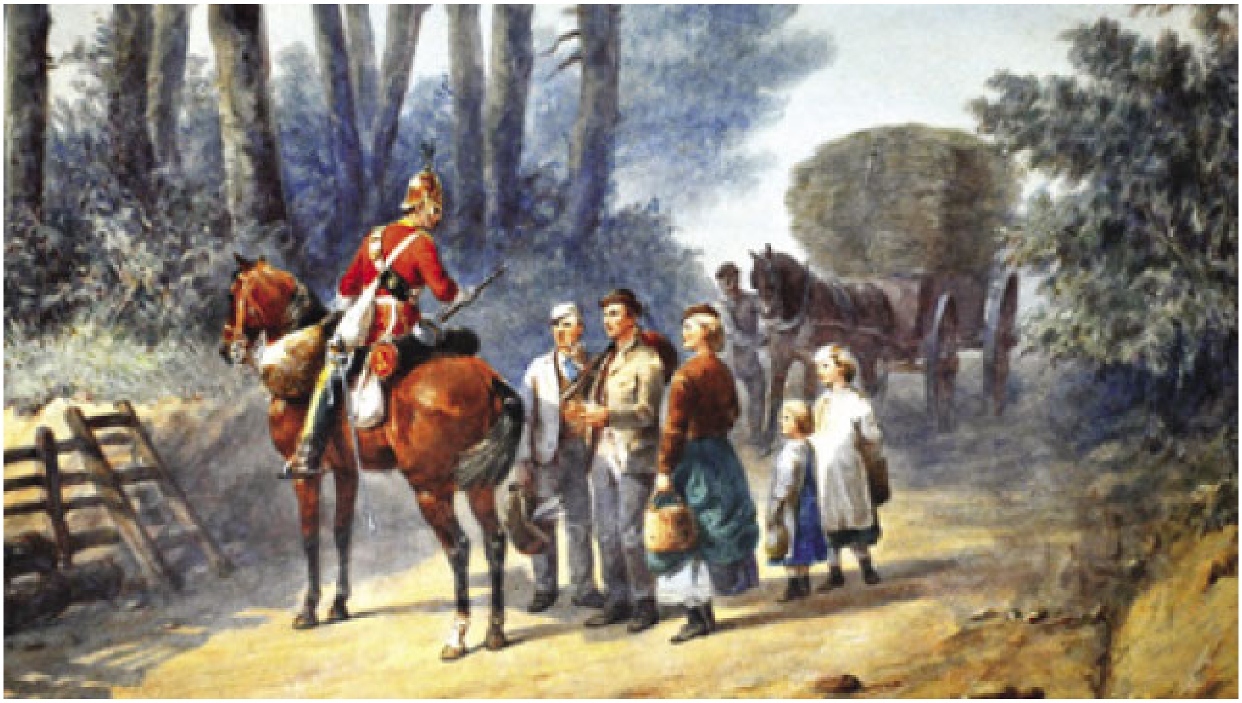
The Abyssinian climate was far from ideal for any sort of campaigning by European troops and was especially bad for horses. The cavalry was principally used to secure perimeters and to seal off potential escape routes from Magdala, while the infantry pressed home an assault on the fortress that resulted in its capture and subsequent destruction, the release of the hostages and Theodore's suicide. On the route back to the Red Sea, the spring rains began and turned a dust bowl into a mud bath; forty-five horses and two soldiers died before the regiment left for England at the end of May. The remaining three troops, which formed the left wing, quitted Bombay a day later and the two wings were united with the Depot in Chichester in November 1868. The regiment's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Conyers Tower, was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) and mentioned in despatches for his conduct at Magdala; he was Colonel of the Regiment 1891–1903.

Among the many trophies removed from Magdala as part of the spoils of war was an Abyssinian silver drum reputedly dating from the 15th century. Napier ordered that it should be divided between three of the British regiments present at the fall of the fortress and so the regiment acquired one of its most permanent battle trophies: the section of drum was embellished by a London silversmith and mounted upon an Abyssinian shield. The other two sections of the drum remain with the 1st Battalion, the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border), successors of the 4th Regiment of Foot, and with the 3rd Battalion, the Yorkshire Regiment, successors of the 33rd Regiment of Foot.

The 3rd Dragoon Guards remained in southern England for the next seven years until being posted to Ireland in 1875. England had quietened down a lot since the days of Chartism and Reform but Ireland was gradually moving towards unified and articulated concepts of Home Rule and the more violent manifestations of these were to keep British soldiers in Ireland actively engaged in attempting to keep the peace throughout the island for the next fifty years. The regiment remained in Ireland until 1882.



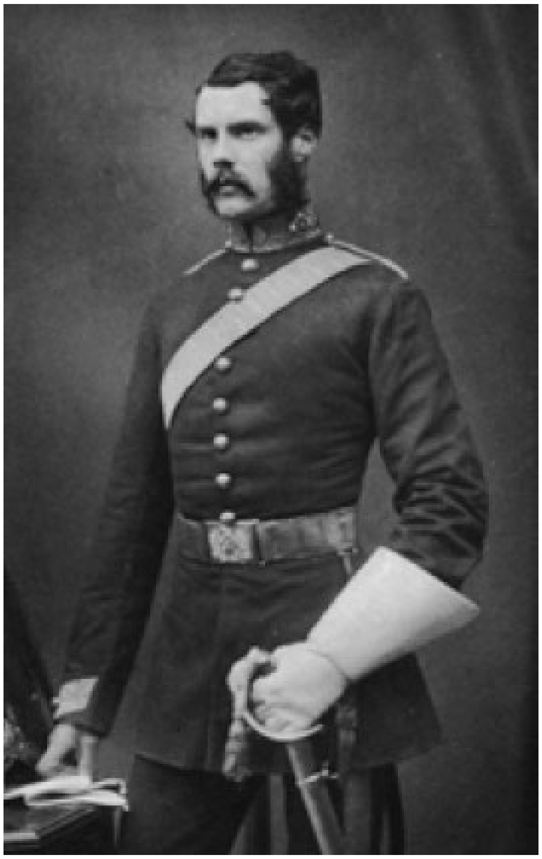
A troop of 3rd Dragoon Guards in Marching Order, probably on exercise; on the extreme right is an officer and in the left foreground is the troop sergeant-major; watercolour by Orlando Norie, late 1860s.



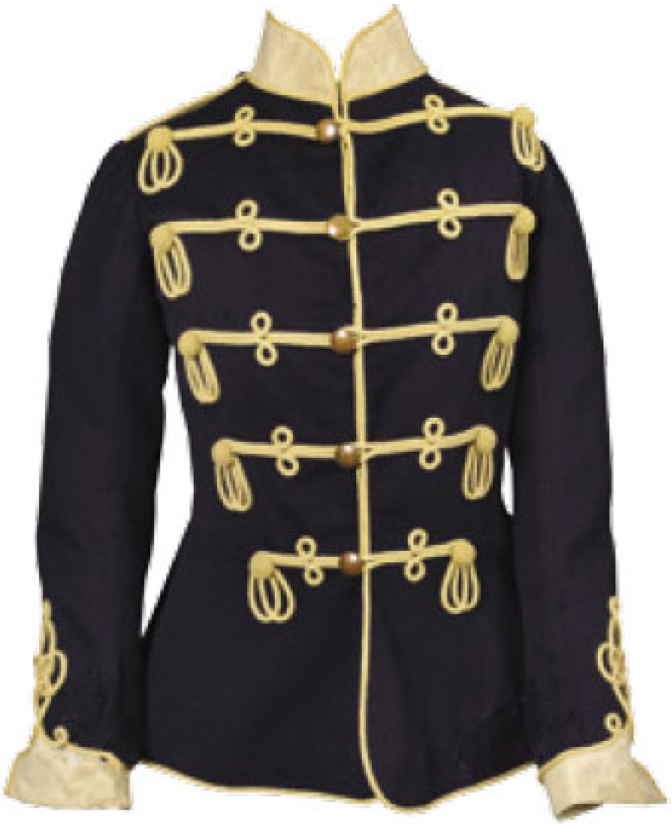
A sentry of 3rd Dragoon Guards at the barricade to Chobham Camp, Surrey; watercolour by Orlando Norie, c. 1870.

In 1855, the demands of active service in the Crimea led to radical changes in army uniform, with tunics replacing coatees and jackets for all except the Royal Horse Artillery. Officers' Full Dress tunics of dragoon guards (apart from the Carabiniers) and dragoons, had a gold lace loop at each end of the collar, one on each cuff, and three on each skirt behind. The facing colour appeared on the front edging, collar and cuffs. Shoulder-cords were plain gold loops. Officers' rank was now shown on the collar. In Dress uniform, cornets wore an embroidered star, lieutenants a crown, and captains a crown and star. Field officers'

rank was now also shown on the collar both in Dress and Undress. Soldiers' tunics were similar in style, but with worsted lace or cord decoration, and NCOs' rank-badges on the right arm, as on the obsolete coatee.



Cornet Robert Norwood, 3rd Dragoon Guards, wearing the 1855 pattern Full Dress tunic.



Private’s tunic trimmed with yellow worsted cord, 6th Dragoon Guards 1855–61.

The Carabiniers, like the light dragoon regiments, adopted a blue hussar-style tunic edged and trimed with gold cord for officers (see page 109, right) and yellow worsted for soldiers, forming five loops on each side and ornaments on the back seams.

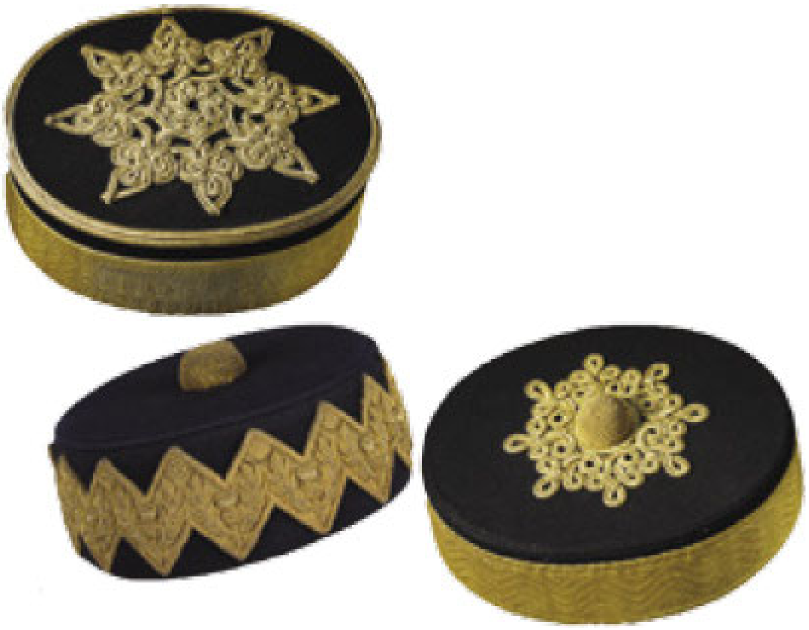
Dark-blue trousers continued to be worn for all occasions. For mounted duties, ‘booted overalls’ (trousers reinforced with leather and strapped under the foot) were used by all ranks. The stripes on officers’ trousers were wide gold lace, except in the Carabiniers, who kept double stripes of gold lace.

The Albert helmet remained unchanged for the dragoon guards, while the Greys retained the simplified bearskin cap authorised in 1845. The

large bicorne hat worn for evening occasions was discontinued. Cocked hats were worn by quartermasters, paymasters, surgeons and veterinary officers, but these were smaller than previously and with a plainer loop.

Officers' waist-belts and shoulder-belts continued to be worn, but gold waist-sashes and sabretaches were abolished, and embroidered pouches replaced by ones with silver flaps. These flaps were mounted with a gilt royal cypher in most regiments, but the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the Greys had special patterns. These pouches were worn both with the Dress shoulder-belt and the white leather Undress belt.

The principle that, in combat, Dress uniform and headdress would be worn with Undress belts and without plumes was unchanged. For Undress duties, the lace-edged stable jacket, of the same colour as the Dress uniform, was worn when mounted, with blue frock coats for dismounted occasions. For heavy cavalry, the frock coat described in the 1846 Dress Regulations was replaced briefly by one trimmed with black cord. Scarlet cloaks were replaced by blue ones, and shabraques were restored. The first mention of the Greys' vandyke forage cap band appears in the 1857 Dress Regulations. Officers' peaked Undress caps were replaced shortly afterwards by a peakless forage cap, known as a 'pillbox', which remained in use until 1902.



Officers’ pill-box caps, c. 1860–1902: top, 6th Dragoon Guards; left, 2nd Dragoons; right, 3rd Dragoon Guards.

In 1861 the Carabiniers adopted a blue tunic with gold cord edging but without gold loops in front, and with a single row of buttons. Subalterns wore gold-cord Austrian knots on their sleeves, while captains’ and field officers’ sleeves bore massive gold-braid decoration. Carabinier officers continued to wear gold-laced belts in Undress as well as Dress. The other ranks’ tunics had plain white collars and white cloth piping to the front. The Austrian knots on their sleeves, and their shoulder-straps, were of yellow cord.

In 1870 pantaloons (similar to riding breeches but without knee-buttons) and black knee-boots replaced booted overalls for mounted duties. Officers’ pantaloons had gold lace stripes, although the Carabiniers wore double white stripes in Undress.

In 1871 the Albert helmet was replaced by a simplified pattern. Carabinier officers’ helmets bore a star with plain rays instead of the

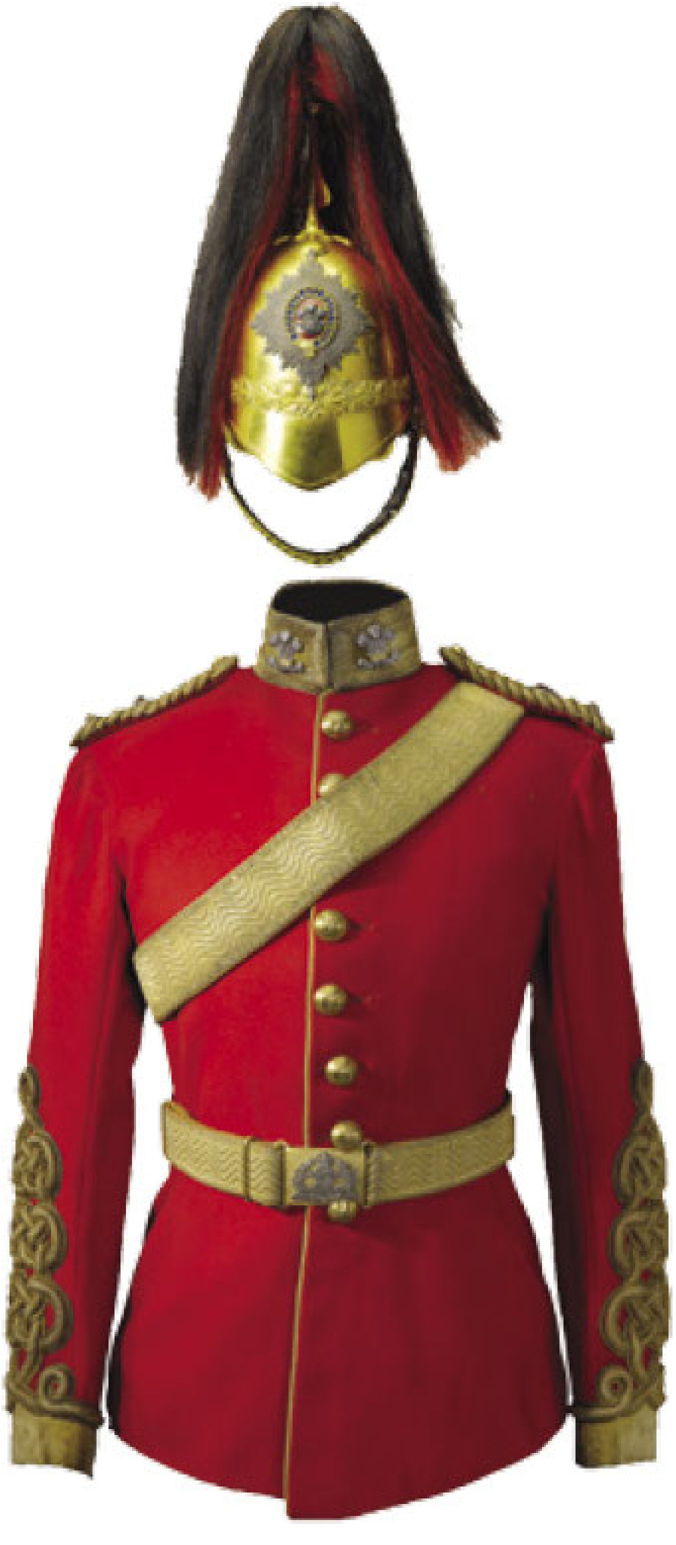
normal diamond-cut star; white plumes replaced the earlier black plumes.

By 1874, officers' tunics of the 3rd Dragoon Guards and Greys had pointed cuffs, edged with cord, traced with Russia braid, forming an Austrian knot on the sleeves above. This knot was single for subalterns, double for captains and triple for field officers. Each skirt had a three-pointed flap, known as a slash, edged with cord and braid as on the sleeves. Other ranks' tunics had the same decoration in plain yellow cord, with additional 'eyes' to the top and sides of the Austrian knots on the sleeves, and shoulder-straps of facing material, also edged with yellow cord.

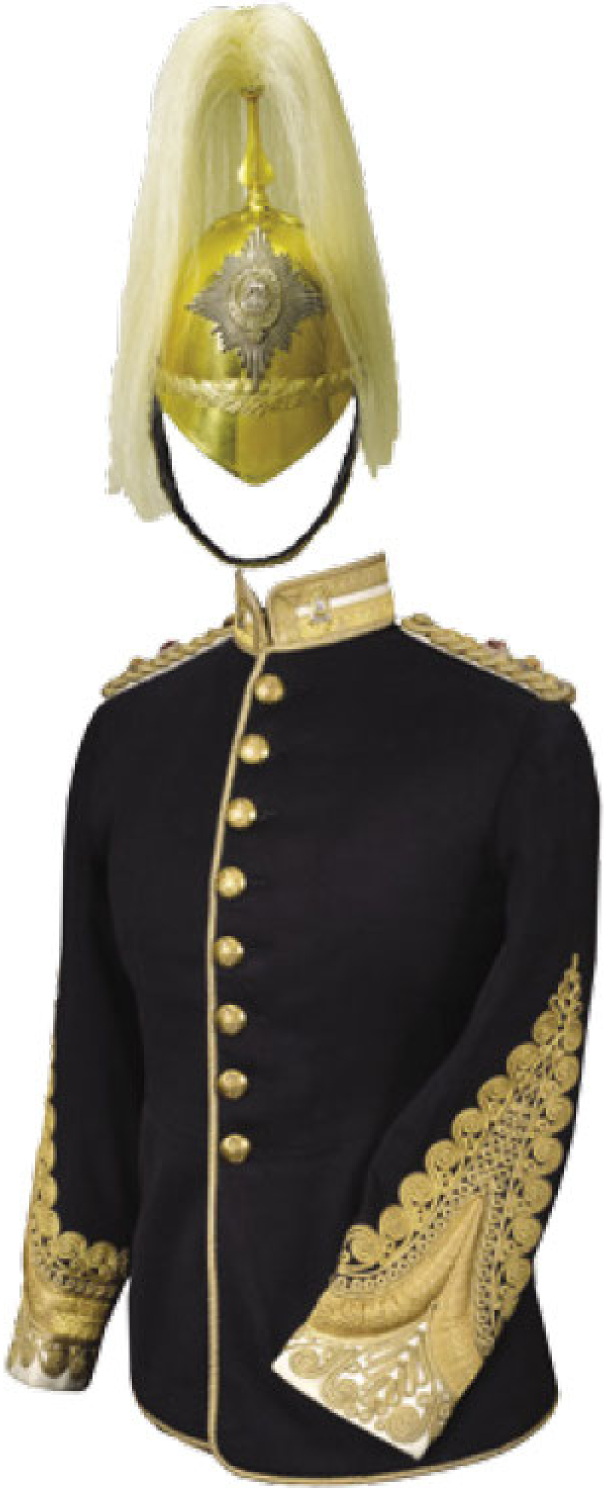
By the same date, the original pattern frock coat, with flat braid trim and four rows of olivets, was restored and became standard for all heavy cavalry.

During the Second Afghan War (1878–80), the Carabiniers appear to have adapted their uniform to local conditions on an individual basis (as can be seen on page 111), with the poshteen, a goat-skin, usually embroidered and worn with the fur on the inside, sometimes over a stable-jacket, being a popular form of dress.

Charles Webb



Field officer’s 1871 pattern helmet, tunic and accoutrements, with triple-knotted braid on sleeves, 3rd Dragoon Guards, c. 1900.



Officer's 1871 pattern helmet and Full Dress tunic, adopted in 1861, 6th Dragoon Guards, c. 1900.

6TH DRAGOON GUARDS

The Carabiniers landed in India at Chinsurah (now Hugli-Chuchura), north of Calcutta (now Kolkata), in December 1856. Chinsurah was the northernmost deepwater anchorage on the River Hooghly (Hugli) and most British regiments disembarking for service in the Bengal Presidency of the East India Company's territories landed there. From Chinsurah the regiment was embarked upon barges up the Hooghly to the Ganges (Ganga) and towed along the Ganges to Allahabad. From Allahabad, after making camp for a short period, the Carabiniers marched along the Grand Trunk Road to Meerut, a major British military cantonment 40 miles north-east of Delhi, which was reached on 11 March 1857.

On arrival in Meerut the regiment received its horses, 621 in all. Half of them were from government stud farms and the remainder were the cast-offs of Indian cavalry regiments. By being posted to India the regiment had had to increase its establishment by well over 100 per cent (the Indian regimental establishment being 790 soldiers of all ranks). In consequence, a large number of recruits were untrained and fully half the horses either unbroken or unbreakable. The regiment's nominal strength was 652; its effective strength would have been about half that. All the British regiments in Meerut were under-strength and totalled, at most and nominally, 1,700 men. Cantoned with them were three regiments of the Bengal Army, totalling 2,230 British officers and Indian other ranks. Unluckily for the Carabiniers, the Indian Mutiny began in Meerut.

The issue of the greased cartridges, which was only the catalyst for the Mutiny, came to a head in Meerut on 23 April 1857 when the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry refused, on parade, to handle them. An example was made, eighty-five sowars (cavalry privates) being court martialled and sentenced to ten years' hard labour. The Carabiniers were detailed to provide an escort for the prisoners, whose harsh sentences seemed to their comrades disproportionately severe, given their defence of acting to preserve their faith.

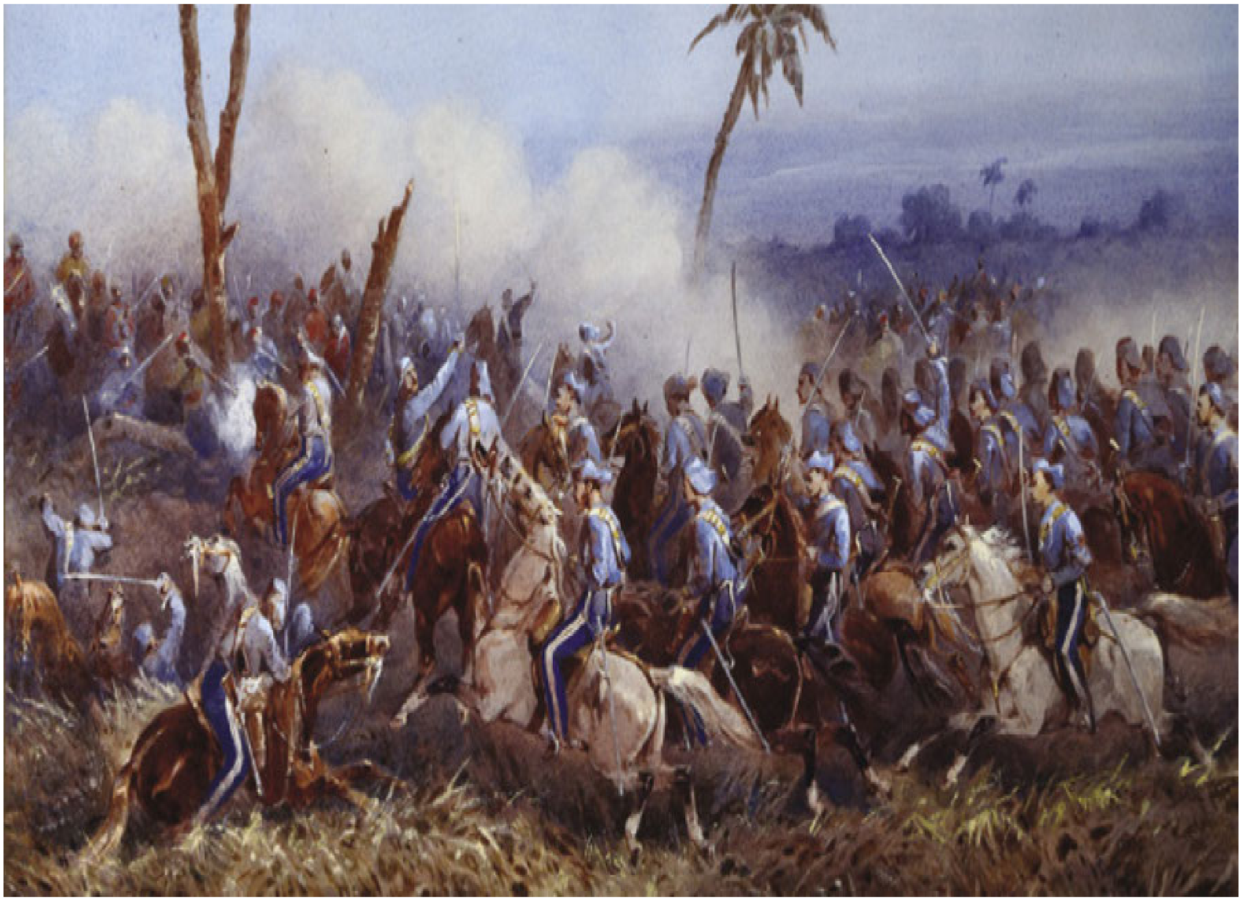
The Indian regiments in Meerut seethed with mounting indignation for a fortnight, during which time opportunities were taken to establish the degree of support that a coordinated rising might attract from Indian regiments cantoned elsewhere in Bengal. On 10 May sepoys (infantry privates) of the 11th and 20th Bengal Native Infantry, together with a mob from the bazaar, began to riot, killed some of their officers and induced the NCOs and privates of the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry to join them. The gaol was broken open, buildings set alight and several more Europeans were murdered. The Carabiniers' lines were closest to those of the Indian regiments and, as news of the uprising spread, the regiment mounted all the men that it could and assembled with the other British regiments, ready for action. By the time all the British troops were prepared, all the rolls called and some sort of appraisal made of the situation, darkness had fallen and the movements of the mutineers were unknown.

On 2 June 1857 Corporal Frederick Woodward of the 6th Dragoon Guards wrote to his sister in Exeter describing his return from a vedette (picket):

I have just come in from a vedette party, where we had to face seventy-four runaway soldiers; they had all their arms and ammunitions. We were very few in number (about twenty), and they had fled into a thick wood, where we could not get with our horses, and they got behind trees and other places, and opened fire upon us. I can assure you the bullets came whistling past my head till they made me wink! We had to dismount and follow them into the wood. Then came the struggle; blood was flying like rain. One of my comrades was stabbed through the heart with a bayonet, and several more wounded. I had the top of my helmet blown off by a bullet, and my horse was wounded in the shoulder, but not very severely. We over-flanked them at last, and killed every man; but the heat and the sickness of the heart were dreadful, as we could not obtain any water for some time.

Mick Stanley

In fact they were marching on Delhi, which they reached unchallenged. Delhi was occupied, its Indian regiments joined the Mutiny and British power in the city was eradicated. A troop of the Carabiniers rode down and sabred a party of Bengal Sappers and Miners on the road from Meerut to Delhi on 16 May. Two squadrons of the regiment formed part of the force that left Meerut to lay siege to Delhi at the end of the month. At Ghazi-ud-din-Nagar (Ghaziabad) on 30 May this small force was attacked by some 5,000 mutineers who had left Delhi for the purpose. The Carabiniers supported the artillery, which silenced the mutineers' guns and added to the slaughter executed by the 60th Rifles; the Carabiniers' squadrons under Lieutenant-Colonel William Custance and Captain Charles Rosser pursued the fleeing mutineers for several miles after the battle. The mutineers tried again the following day, with similar results, and in the two actions the regiment's losses approximated to six or seven killed and between three and eight wounded.



6th Dragoon Guards in acton against mutineers 1857–58; watercolour by Orlando Norie, 1860s.

At Alipur on 7 June 1857 the small Meerut force was joined by two brigades coming south from Ambala, to form a siege train of about 3,500 men together with perhaps twenty times as many Indian servants. The 9th Lancers, a regiment which had been in India since 1842, contrasted in its white hot-weather uniforms with the heavy blue tunics and overalls of the Carabiniers' two squadrons; the two regiments formed the British regular cavalry part of the cavalry brigade under the leadership of Brigadier (later General Sir) James Hope Grant (1808–75), one of the most able cavalry soldiers of his time.

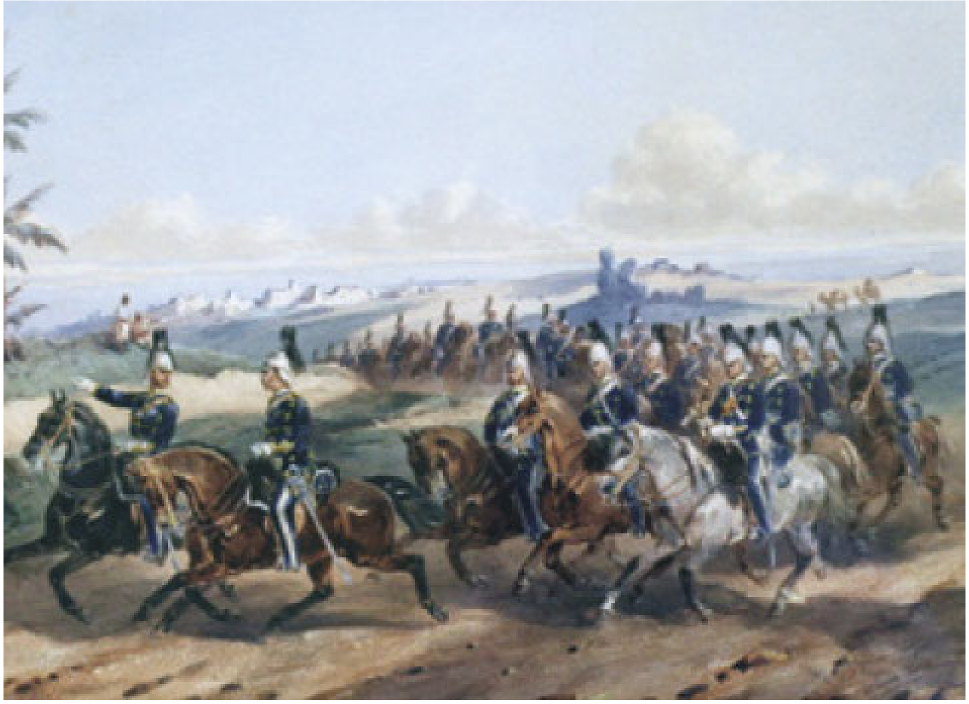
In his account of the Indian Mutiny, published in Survivors' Tales of Great Events (1906), Private Joseph Bowater of the 6th Dragoon Guards describes being alert to any movement or the slightest noise. It was feared that the mutineers would take every opportunity to attack them while they slept:

There was on one particular night a strange noise near me, a stealthy something which I could not understand, a noise which was not walking, nor crawling, nor running; but a wriggling or gliding-over-the-ground sort of noise coming towards me and my precious horse. I shivered and trembled, just as a man will who is afraid of ghosts, although he does not believe in them. The sound came nearer, it was at my very feet. I fell upon the thing, which I could hear but not see – and instantly I grasped a long, naked, oily body – a knife-armed mutineer, who was wriggling up like a serpent to hamstring my horse, I closed with him, and furiously tried to hold him; but he slipped through my hands as easily as a greased pole. He was almost free, nearly on his feet and away, leaving his knife behind. But my blood was up; I made a last effort. I gripped the sliding shins, bought him up by the ankles, and… Some of them were dealt with on the spot, and some were taken to the gallows or the gun.

Mick Stanley

The Carabiniers' squadrons commanded by Colonel Custance led the division's advance on Delhi on 8 June and attacked a force of mutineers entrenched at Badli-ki-Serai, 6 miles outside the city. After a brief artillery duel, the 75th Regiment of Foot and the 60th Rifles attacked with the bayonet, overran the mutineers' positions and, aided by the 9th Lancers, captured eleven guns. The Carabiniers were active in the pursuit and mopping-up operations as the division continued its advance on Delhi.

The siege of Delhi was concentrated on the Ridge, a spur of land rising above the city to the north and west, which commanded the vital lines of communication between Delhi and the Punjab. This siege lasted three months and during that period, throughout the summer heat and the monsoon, the regiment's strength was gradually reduced to one squadron, more by disease than from wounds. Small actions were fought and, at one, an understrength troop of Carabiniers recruits, commanded by Lieutenant James Stillman, was taken by surprise by a body of mutineer cavalry and routed, its confusion being alleviated by prompt action on the part of a Horse Artillery troop which dispersed the mutineers. Delhi was finally taken by storm in September and the regiment detached to form part of a column which raided mutineer territories west of Delhi.



A troop of 6th Dragoon Guards in India, late 1850s; two officers lead, with the troop trumpeter on the left of the front rank and on a grey; watercolour by Orlando Norie, 1860s.

The two squadrons of the regiment which marched from Meerut to Delhi and took part in the siege and capture of Delhi were chiefly formed of seasoned soldiers and the better trained of the new recruits. Left behind in Meerut was the remainder of the regiment, the left wing under Colonel Henry Jones, the Commanding Officer, which constituted much of the garrison of the city and spent several months in training. Small expeditions were necessary against foraging bands of mutineers and by July the Carabiniers were able to mount another squadron of two troops which, commanded by Captain George Wardlaw, was in action several times between July and December 1857. At Narnul, in November, Wardlaw's squadron, together with one of the Guides' Cavalry, defeated the mutineer Jodhpur Legion in a spectacular cavalry charge against cavalry and guns. Attempting to repeat the experience at Gungeree (Gangiri) on 14 December, against a battery of mutineer cannon and across land intersected with nullahs (dry watercourses), Wardlaw and his two lieutenants, John Hudson and Sydney Vyse, together with five other ranks, were killed; four other ranks were also wounded in an action that resulted in the second largest number of regimental casualties during the Mutiny.

Early in 1858, with Delhi once again secure, a number of field forces and columns were formed for the express purpose of hunting down parties of mutineers that were still in the field in some force. Colonel Jones led a four-troop squadron of the regiment as part of one of those columns and was in action on 1 May 1858 at Kukrauli (Kakrala) together with Cureton's Multani Horse. The two regiments repeatedly charged mutineers to clear the village but, although successfully fought, the battle of Kukrauli resulted in the regiment's greatest losses in action during the Mutiny – twenty-four of all ranks becoming casualties. After Kukrauli, at which the force commander had been killed, command of the column devolved upon Colonel Jones and he gave command of his squadron to Captain John Forster. Forster's squadron, with the rest of the force, marched towards a mutineer stronghold at Bareilly where it was joined by part of the Roorkhi Field Force, which included a further Carabinier squadron under Captain Thomas Bott. After the successful assault on Bareilly, a further squadron of the Carabiniers, commanded by Major Robert Bickerstaff, marched together with other regiments to the relief of the 82nd Foot, besieged in Shahjahanpur.

Between June and September 1858, whilst most active campaigning was halted because of the onset of the monsoon, the regiment was split between Meerut, Moradabad and Shahjahanpur, its strength being computed at 748 officers and men and 703 horses. Campaigning began again in November 1858 and two squadrons, the right wing of the regiment under Colonel Jones, were assigned as escort to the Commander-in-Chief, General Lord Clyde GCB (1792–1863). Lord Clyde, the very recently ennobled Sir Colin Campbell, was at that time sixty-six years old and was the son of a Glasgow carpenter of Highland lineage whose family estates had been sequestrated after the 1745 Jacobite rebellion; he had been a soldier since 1808, having been first commissioned at the age of fifteen. Clyde had commanded the Highland Brigade at Balaklava, after which battle he had made a point of congratulating the Greys on their part in the Charge of the Heavy Brigade. Noted for his terse Caledonian wit, he was a far from colourful, but desperately efficient and methodical, soldier, possessed of the ideal dogged, determined qualities necessary for the long, slow business of suppressing the Mutiny. Clyde’s campaign in Oudh in 1858 and 1859 effectively finished the Mutiny in northern India. The right wing of the regiment returned to Muttra after the clearing of Oudh and was joined there in May 1859 by the left wing which, commanded by Colonel Custance, had been operating separately, first in the north of Oudh and then from Agra as part of the pursuit of Tatya Tope, the last mutineer leader to have escaped capture. Colonel Jones was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) for his service during the Mutiny, rose to the rank of general and was Colonel of the Carabiniers 1873–1880.

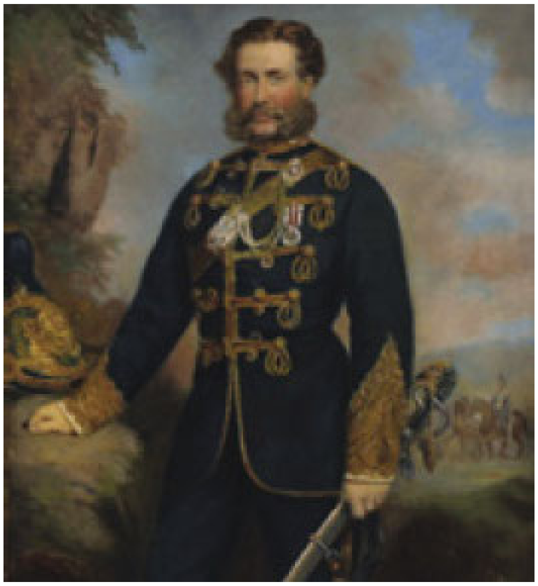
Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Baker Creed Russell played a major part in the activities of the regiment during the Mutiny. While much of the regiment was garrisoning Delhi, only a squadron could be spared to operate elsewhere. Russell commanded the cavalry detachment at Mynpore where 250 mutineers were killed and was the sole Carabinier officer to survive the battle of Gungeree.

Lieutenant-General Sir Baker Russell GCB KCMG as Colonel of the 13th Hussars.

He later transferred to the 13th Hussars and commanded them when a young Robert Baden-Powell joined as a cornet. An extract from Sir Robert Baden-Powell's Indian Memories (1915) runs as follows:

On one occasion we were inspected by a General whose life had been passed at infantry work. Sir Baker [as he later became] hoped, in making the regiment march past, to impress him by its steadiness. Therefore when it came to our galloping by in a succession of squadrons he meant us to go at a steady canter, each squadron in rigid formation. So he turned to his trumpeter and cried: ‘Sound the canter.’ Well, there is no trumpet call laid down for the canter, and the trumpeter therefore sounded the next best to it, which was the gallop. We in the regiment, anxious to make a good show, pressed forward at once at a sharp gallop. The Colonel, seeing this from his post alongside the General, shouted to his trumpeter, ‘Sound the canter!’ The trumpeter again sounded the gallop. Hearing the gallop repeated we imagined that it meant we were not going fast enough, and therefore we just let ourselves go, and by the time we reached the saluting point opposite the General and Sir Baker, the whole regiment was a rushing tornado of men and horses in a whirl of dust, and we dashed past in a dense, confused mob. The Colonel, however, was not at a loss, and turned to the General with a well-assumed smile, and puffing out his chest, said: ‘There, sir! You never saw a regiment gallop past like that before. That is something.’ The General, being completely ignorant on the subject, took his cue from the Colonel and said: ‘No, that is splendid; I never saw anything so good in my life,’ and reported upon it accordingly.

Mick Stanley



Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Bickerstaff, 6th Dragoon Guards; oil on canvas, artist unknown, c. 1858. Bickerstaff served in the regiment 1844–58, seeing extensive service in the Indian Mutiny and being several times mentioned in despatches.

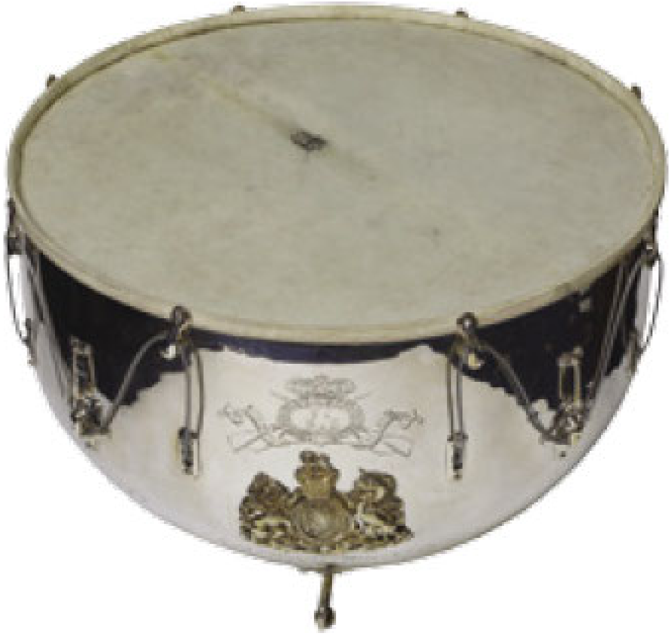
Table centrepiece in silver commemorating the officers and men of 6th Dragoon Guards killed during the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny, 1861–62.

In the two years that the Carabiniers were engaged in the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, from May 1857 to May 1859, regimental casualties were about 124 of all ranks. In recognition of this sacrifice and of the Carabiniers' service, the battle honour 'Delhi 1857' was awarded in 1863 and thereafter added to the regimental standard.

After detaching a two-troop squadron as escort to the Viceroy between December 1859 and January 1860, the Carabiniers returned to peacetime soldiering in India for a brief spell before embarking for Britain in January 1861. One hundred and thirty-four volunteers were left behind to join other cavalry regiments in India and the regiment landed at Gravesend, Kent, in July 1861. Several of the officers, including Colonels Custance and Jones, had returned by the quicker, if personally more expensive, overland route. Colonel Jones had busied himself on his arrival in England with buying horses for the regiment to be ready when it returned to Chatham. Regimental strength, when the Carabiniers landed, was 635 of all ranks but a third of the officers were shortly thereafter placed on half pay and 180 of the soldiers demobilised to reduce the regiment to its home establishment level.

Until 1865 the Carabiniers were stationed in south-east England but in that year the regiment was posted in great haste to Ireland for seven years to form part of the forces concentrated to attempt to deal with the Fenian troubles. The Fenian Brotherhood was a secret society, originally organised in the United States in 1858, which had as its principal aim the overthrow of British government in Ireland. Masterminded by exiled Irishmen who had been implicated in an abortive rising in 1848, the Fenians presented little real threat to peace in Ireland until after the end of the American Civil War in 1865, when demobilised American officers of Irish extraction were encouraged to participate in an armed expedition to Ireland. Acting with the aid of informers, and suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, the government in Dublin swiftly rounded up most of the ringleaders and the presence of an increased military force in Ireland prevented any major disturbances. Fenian troubles continued in Canada, however, and were transferred to the British mainland in the form of bombings and murders during the 1870s and 1880s.

Frederick Carne Rasch, 6th Dragoon Guards, as a subaltern in stable dress, c. 1867.

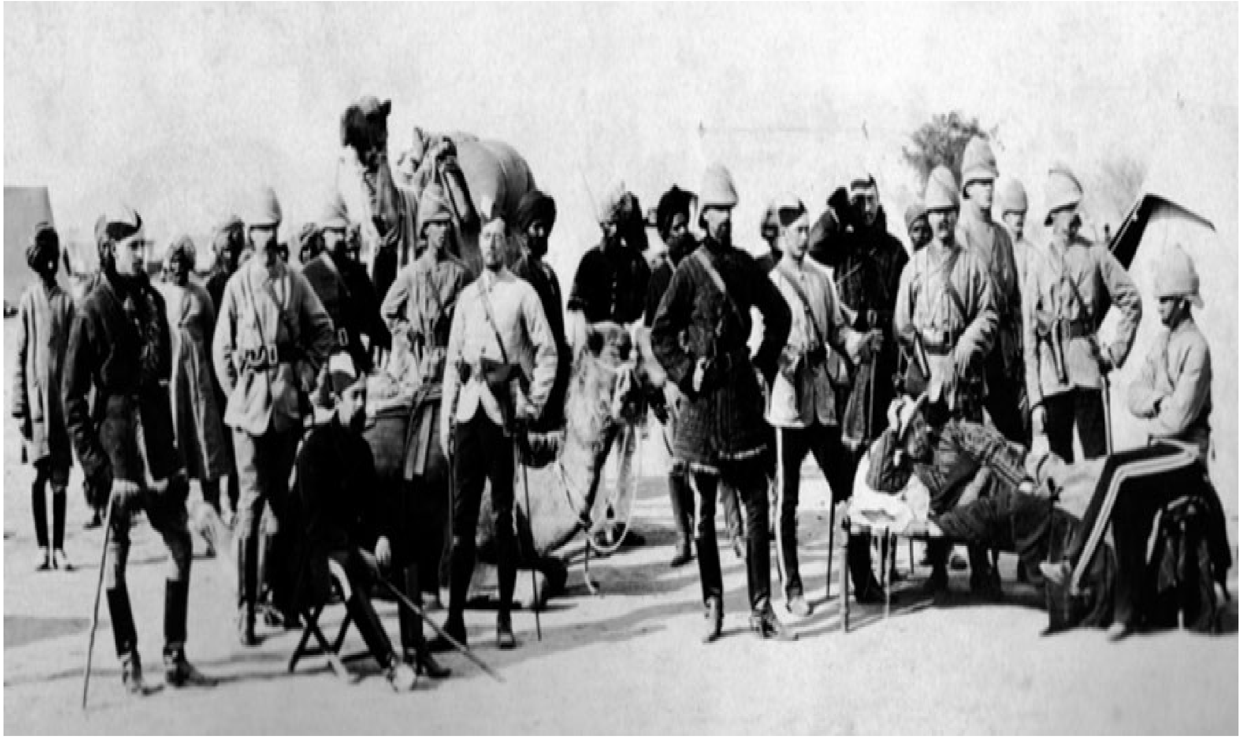


One of a pair of silver kettledrums inscribed, ‘Presented to Colonel Napier, the Officers and Men of the Carabiniers from Frederick Carne Rasch, Lieut.. In Memory of the 9 Years he had the honour to serve in the Regiment 1876’.

Prior to their move to Ireland in 1865 the Carabiniers had been presented with a pair of kettledrums by Cornet Hardin Burnley. Eleven years later, in 1876, after the regiment had been at home for four years, it received another pair, in silver, from Lieutenant Frederick Carne Rasch, upon his retirement. The reason why the Carabiniers required a second pair of kettledrums after only eleven years is not recorded but Rasch was handsomely thanked by the Commanding Officer in Regimental Orders for his generosity. Rasch subsequently became a baronet, a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for Essex, and was Member of Parliament for South-East Essex, 1886–90, and for Mid-Essex 1900–08; his eldest son joined the regiment from 1st Battalion, the Essex Regiment in 1903.

In 1877 the Carabiniers embarked once more for India and remained stationed at Ambala until after the outbreak of the Second Afghan War in 1878. Orders were received to proceed to Afghanistan at the beginning of

September 1879 and the entire regiment was moved north, by troop train, to Jhelum at the end of the month. Delayed by a variety of differing orders, the Carabiniers eventually arrived at the fortress of Jellalabad, via the Khyber Pass, in November and were then employed on patrols, escort duty and the protection of lines of communication. Kabul, the capital, was occupied and its Amir, Yakub Khan, was captured and exiled to India, under Carabiniers escort for part of the way. The British forces defeated the Afghans at Charasiah and were themselves humiliated at Maiwand. News of Maiwand, where the 66th Regiment of Foot had been massacred, induced further Afghan uprisings and a squadron of the regiment was in action at Dakka in January 1880 against some Mohmand tribesmen. Two moveable columns were formed and these, together with forming part of the Jellalabad garrison, kept the regiment occupied between March and July 1880. In July 1880 Captain Henry Hamilton, commanding two troops, was part of a force sent to pacify some Mohmand villages and, although operating his force over very unsuitable terrain, encircled the Pathans and induced them to surrender. The relief of Kandahar at the close of the year ended the war, the Carabiniers sustaining total casualties of thirty-four other ranks. In 1881 the regiment was awarded the battle honour ‘Afghanistan 1879–80’. For the next five years, the Carabiniers were based at Sialkot, in the foothills of the western Himalayas.



Officers of 6th Dragoon Guards, Jellalabad, Afghanistan, 1879. The commanding officer – Lieutenant-Colonel John Fryer – stands in the centre, arms akimbo, dressed in a quilted Afghan poshteen and wearing a khaki solar topi.

The conversion of the 6th Dragoon Guards to the light cavalry role in 1851 rendered it sartorially unique among British heavy cavalry regiments: retaining its rank as heavy cavalry, it was largely dressed as light cavalry. The regiment also became unique among British heavy

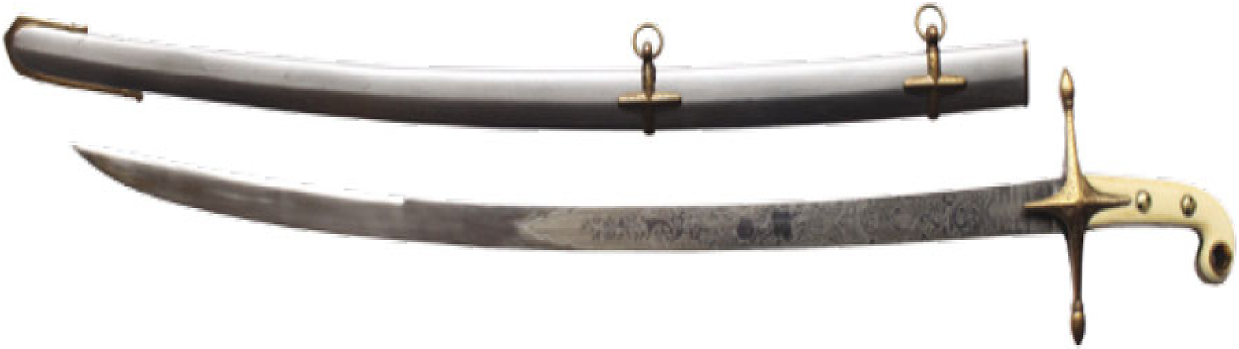
cavalry regiments in terms of its officers' swords, four distinctly differing styles of hilt being worn between 1821 and 1921.

Between 1821 and 1851, the regiment's officers carried the 1821 pattern officers' heavy cavalry sword, with its 'honeysuckle' hilt. After 1851, as light cavalry, the 1821 pattern officers' light cavalry sword, with its 'three-bar' hilt, was adopted. The change in the type of sword carried by the regiment's officers was paralleled in those carried by its other ranks.

It was probably after 1851 that the regiment's officers chose to wear a different type of sword on Dress or levee occasions. This was the mamelukehilted sword, differing styles of which had been popular with light cavalry officers since c. 1800. It seems plausible that the regiment's officers, having been converted to light cavalry and required to dress as such, decided to adopt a light cavalry Dress sword, although for how long those swords were worn remains unknown: their use probably did not long outlive the 1860s although they may have continued in wear by the Regimental Bandmaster into the 1890s (see page 127).

The 1870s was a significant decade in this story. In 1872, a sword – the Officers' Prize for Swordsmanship – was awarded to Major John Fryer; this sword remains in the regimental museum in Edinburgh. Fryer had joined the regiment in 1860 and was clearly a skilled swordsman who retained his athletic build until the end of his life – by which time he was a lieutenant-general and a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB); he was Colonel of the Regiment 1902–17. It is possible that the sword given to Fryer in 1872 was a unique award but he was commanding the regiment when, in November 1877, it received orders to sail to India. Deployment to India implied active service and, as Sprot recorded in his regimental history of 1888, 'During December [1877] the Regiment was armed with the new Martini-Henry Carbine and the basket hilted sword'. The carbine was then the last word in British military firearms technology but the description of the new sword implies that the regiment's other ranks had continued to be equipped with the three-bar hilted 1853 pattern other ranks' cavalry sword, despite its having been replaced by a new pattern – with what contemporaries would have called a 'basket hilt' – in 1864. Just as the

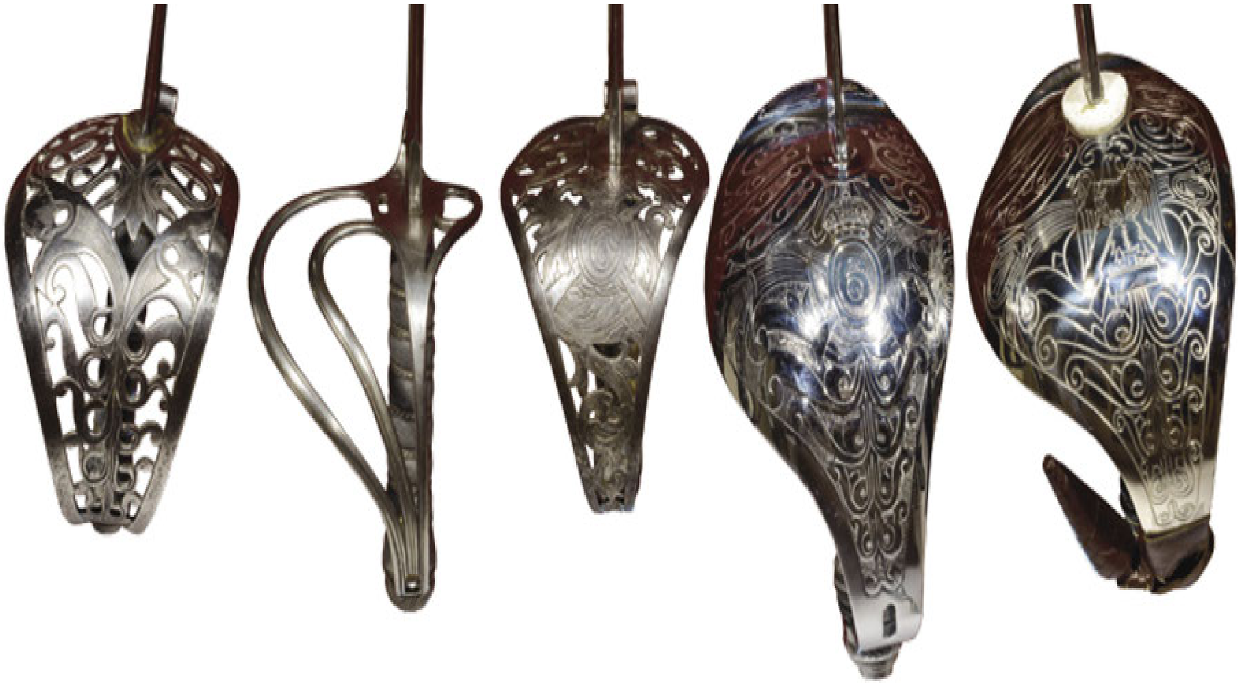
other ranks' swords changed, so Fryer – it appears – decided that his officers should have a new sword too, with a similar hilt to that of the other ranks and thus better fitted for active service. It seems that he approached Messrs Wilkinson, the principal makers and suppliers of military swords of that time, to produce a suitable sword. Signed off by Fryer as 'approved … per Colonel The Carabiniers' on 7 December 1877, it was soon in production as the regiment's officers hurried to buy the new sword – with its distinctive '6' over crossed carbines on the hilt. The first officers' sword with the new regimental hilt to be sold by Wilkinson was bought by Captain William Calvert, who had just exchanged into the regiment from the 5th Dragoon Guards. Calvert took his new sword with him to India and, having had its blade sharpened, carried it when the regiment deployed to Afghanistan in 1879.



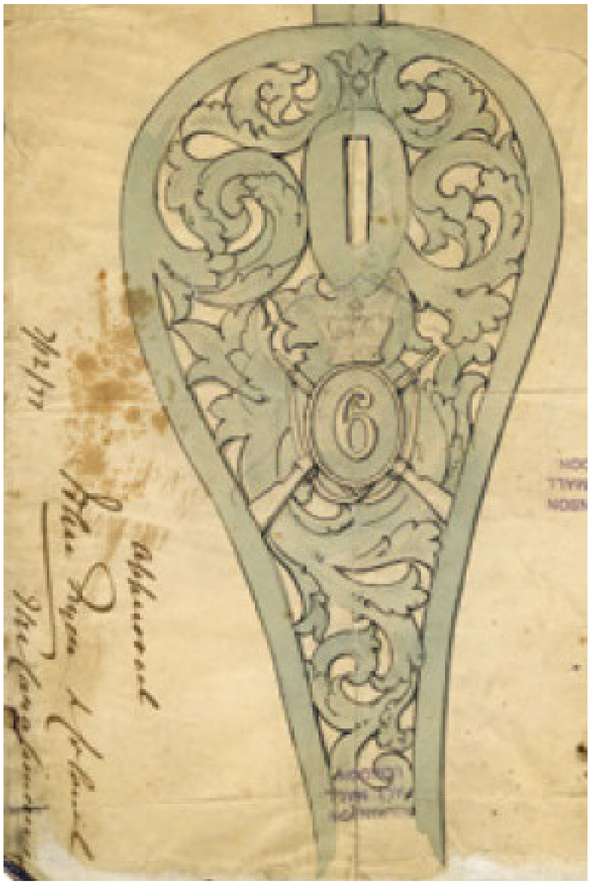
Mameluke-hilted sword, worn by officers of the 6th Dragoon Guards on Dress or levee occasions. (Martin Lewer-Allen)

In 1912, when a new pattern of sword was introduced for all British cavalry officers, the 6th Dragoon Guards maintained its regimental pattern of hilt, transferring the design of a '6' over crossed carbines to the hilt of the new sword. One might expect that this regimental variation of the 1912 pattern officers' cavalry sword would have become redundant in 1922, when the regiment was amalgamated with the 3rd Dragoon Guards, but examples are known from as late as 1929: some

officers in the regiment, even though amalgamated, clearly chose to retain some evidence of their previous regimental identity.



Officers' swords with distinctive hilts, from left: 1821 pattern officers' heavy cavalry sword with 'honeysuckle' hilt; 1821 officers' light cavalry sword with 'three-bar' hilt; Captain William Calvert's sword with distinctive '6' and crossed carbines on hilt, 1877; 1912 pattern officers' cavalry sword with regimental hilt; Captain A. C. Trevelyan's unique regimental sword hilt, designed and made for him in 1975.


Approved
Fryer Lt Colonel
6

The new hilt design prepared by Messrs Wilkinson for Lieutenant-Colonel Fryer in 1877 for use by the officers of the 6th Dragoon Guards. (Robert Wilkinson Latham)

John Fryer as a cornet, 1860.

That might be the end of the story, were it not for the existence of another unique regimental sword. This was designed for and sold to Captain A. C. Trevelyan by Messrs Wilkinson in October 1975. Charles Trevelyan had been a 3rd Carabinier prior to the amalgamation of 1971 and had had an ancestor in the 3rd Dragoon Guards; in 1975 he was regimental Adjutant. He commissioned this sword – its hilt engraved with the regiment's badge and believed to be unique as such – as a particularly stylish departure from the standard 1912 pattern cavalry officers' sword that he would otherwise have been required to carry on appropriate occasions.

Stephen Wood

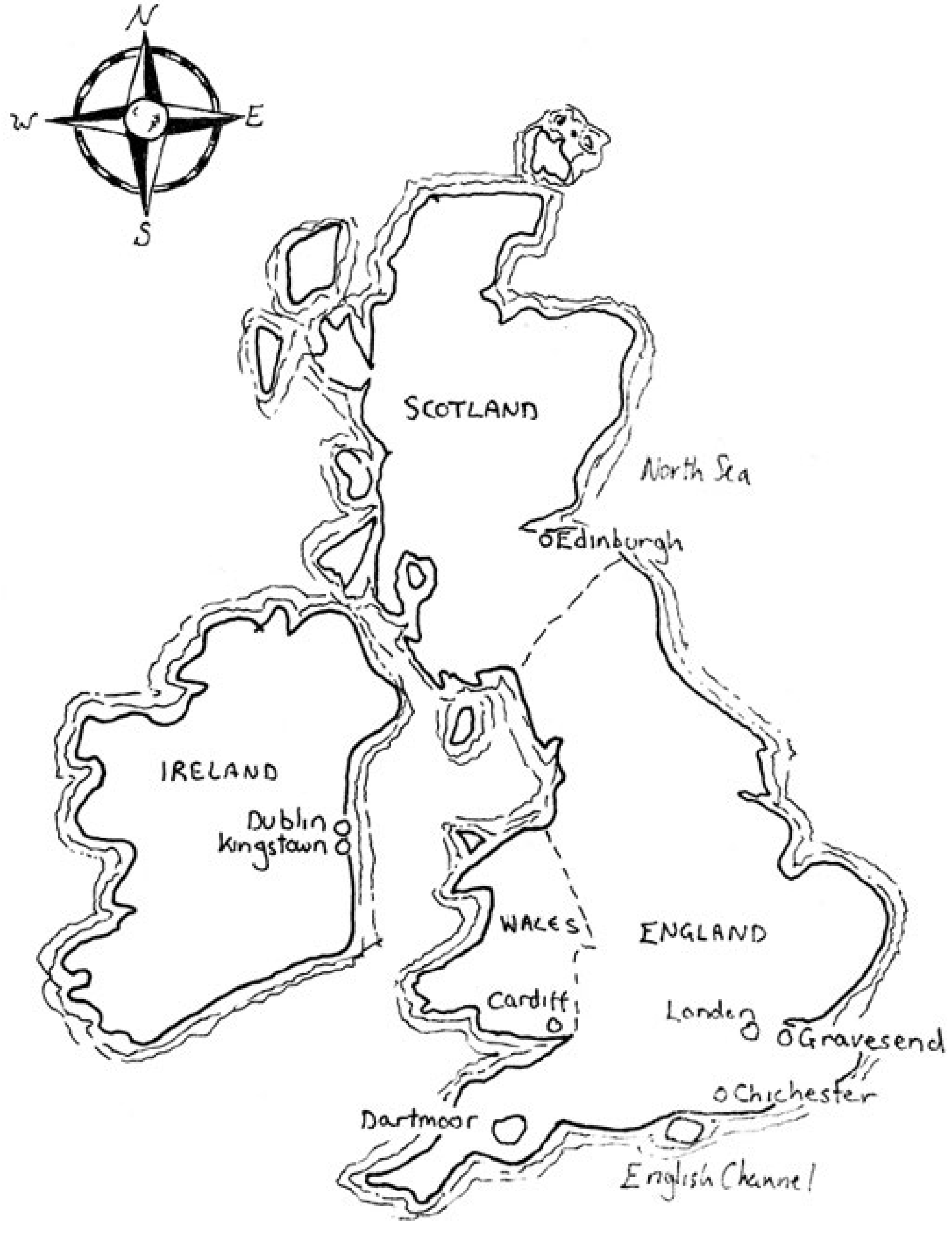
ROYAL SCOTS GREYS

On its return from the Crimea in 1856, the regiment was not posted abroad again as a whole for forty-three years. The only other cavalry regiment to equal this record was the 1st (Royal) Dragoons; even the Household Cavalry went abroad, to Egypt, between 1882 and 1885. Like the Household Cavalry, the Greys sent a detachment to Egypt but not until 1884, so its achievements there will be related in Chapter Five .

The Greys went to Ireland in 1857, remaining there until 1861. The next two years were spent in Scotland and the following two in England, before the regiment returned to Ireland in 1866 to assist the strengthened garrison during the Fenian emergency. In 1872 the regiment returned to Edinburgh and was posted to England in 1873, remaining there until 1878 before returning to Ireland for another four-year tour of duty in 1879. While in England in 1873, the Greys participated in manoeuvres on Dartmoor, in Devon, in the autumn of that year. These manoeuvres were characterised by weather that was inclement even by Dartmoor standards: it appears to have rained solidly for six weeks, from 8 August onwards. If contemporary cartoons in the popular press are to be believed, the weather did nothing for the tempers of some senior officers and it was clearly so memorable an experience that the regiment's officers had an unofficial silver medal struck to commemorate it, with clasps on the medals' ribbons commemorating features on the moor around which the manoeuvres had taken place. An example of one of these medals is in the regimental museum.

The twenty-three years between 1857 and 1880 were a period of considerable change within the army as a whole and, naturally, some of these changes affected the cavalry. The army that returned from the Crimean War had learnt a number of unpleasant lessons the hard way and it is to the credit of the army's administration that, gradually, it chose to learn from its mistakes. In many ways the British army that went to the Crimea to fight the Russians in 1854 was little different, in equipment, attitudes or professionalism, from the army that had fought the French forty years before. While this may seem reprehensible, it must be remembered that the Allies' opponents in the Crimea were in much the same moribund state. Even the French army, frequently held up as an example to the British, had changed very little in the preceding forty years.

Great Britain and Ireland 1857–80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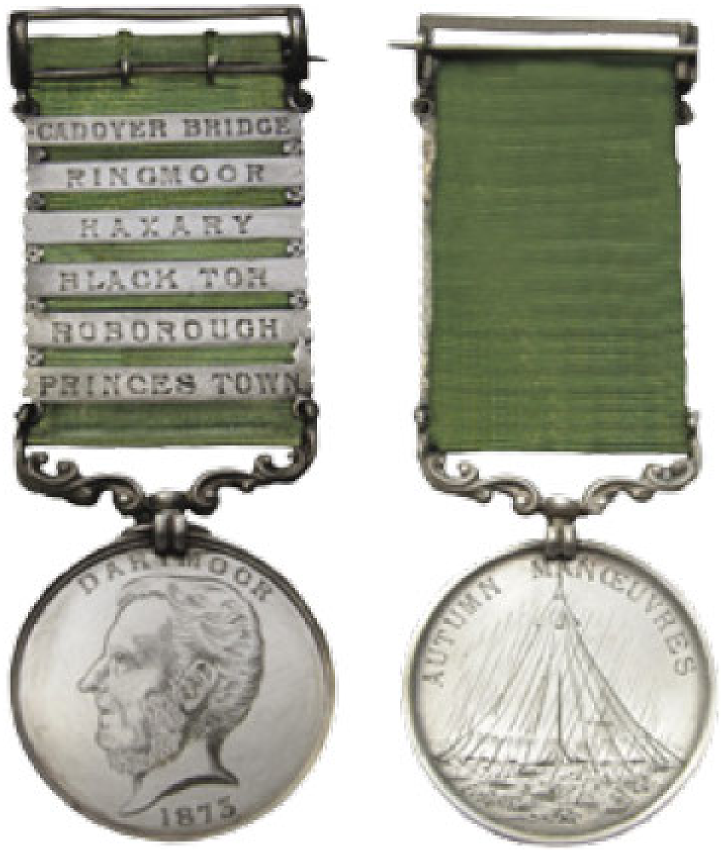
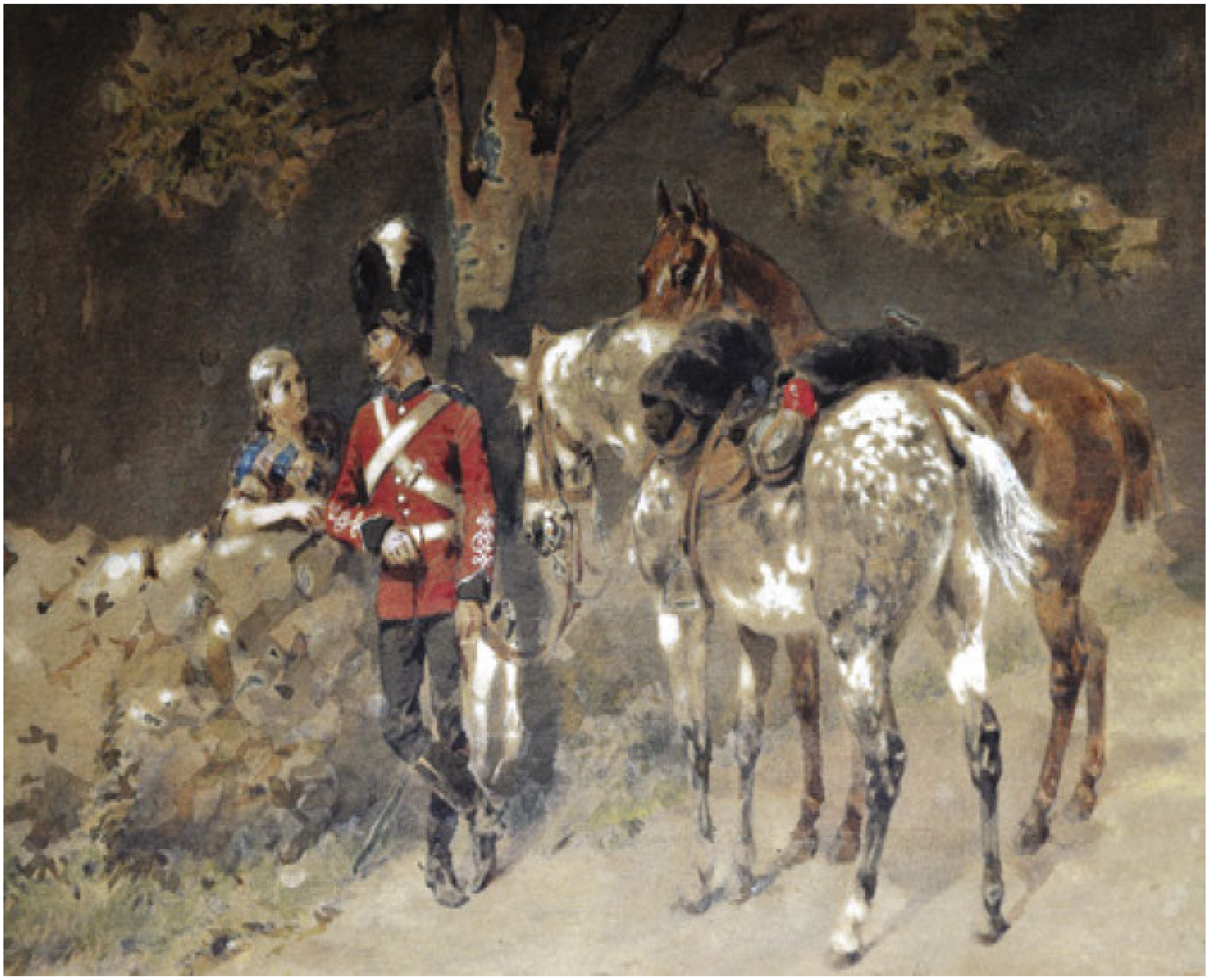
English Channel
200 KM



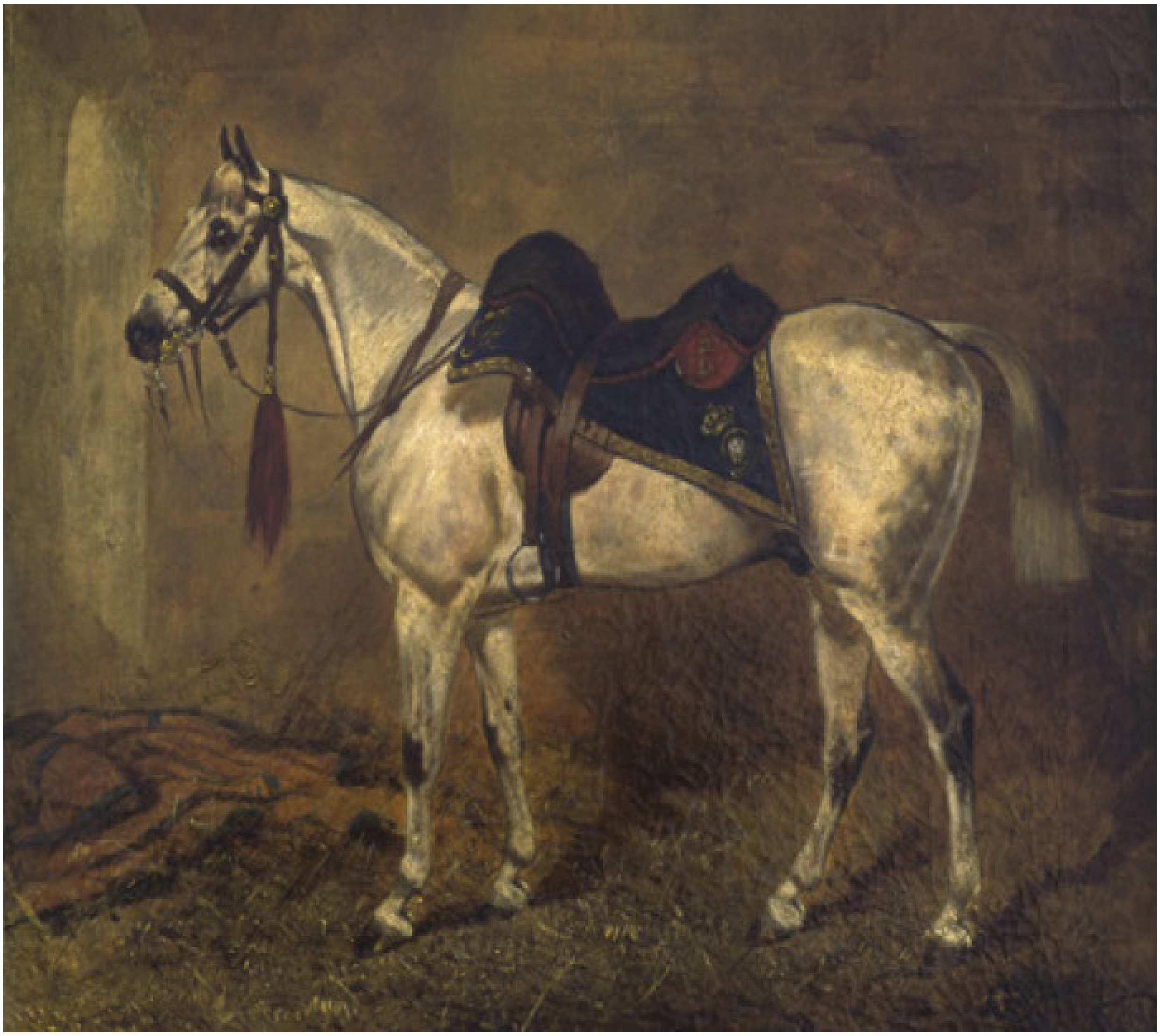
Obverse and reverse of the Scots Greys' officers' 'Dartmoor Medal', commissioned to commemorate a wet exercise in August–September 1873.

Cavalry soldiers other than lancers were taught until well into the 1860s that their principal weapon was the sword. The carbine was for use only in emergencies and, until the advent of a breech-loading weapon in 1864, was more trouble than it was worth to use while mounted. The reasons for the difficulty are easily understood if one considers that the carbine before 1864 was loaded via the muzzle. This operation necessitated tearing the lead bullet out of its paper cartridge (an action which soldiers were trained to do with their teeth), emptying the powder charge from the cartridge down the barrel, ramming the remaining paper on top of it to form a wad and then ramming home the bullet. Following those procedures, a tiny copper percussion cap, shaped like a minute thimble and both fragile and unstable, had to be placed on the breech nipple, beneath the half-cocked hammer. While this was not a difficult procedure if one were dismounted, sheltered, dry, alert and not being shot at, it was far from easy to execute if mounted on a curvetting troop horse in the rain.



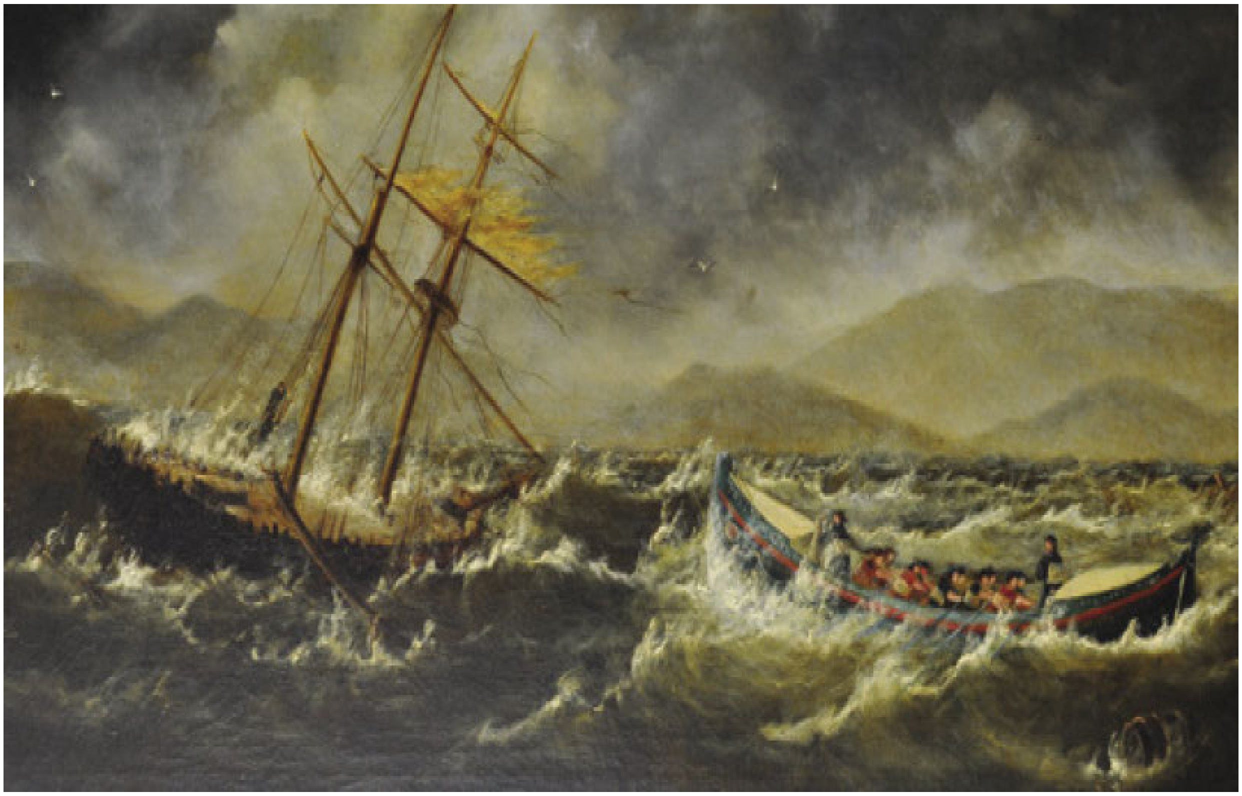
A private of 2nd Dragoons acting as orderly to a staff officer, probably on exercise; the soldier holds his grey troop horse and the bay charger of the officer. Watercolour by Orlando Norie, 1870s.

Under the circumstances, it was not unreasonable for most commanding officers to concentrate on the use of the sword. The swords, though, were far from ideal. Until, in theory, 1853 (but probably, in practice, several years later), light and heavy cavalry were issued with very different patterns of sword. When light cavalry troops, and subsequently regiments, had been created in the mid-18th century, the swords of these soldiers were curved and designed solely to cut – and cut the later models did, exceptionally well if kept sharp and properly handled. In view of the supposed role of the heavy cavalry, in restricting itself to the charge, their swords were designed principally to thrust, though the type used by Ewart and his comrades at Waterloo was far more effective when used as a cleaver. It also proved quite impossible to train soldiers principally to thrust since in a melee – and even the best charges tended to end in melees – the natural instinct was to cut and generally thrash about in the hope of connecting with something; in that type of close-quarter free-for-all, the heavy, solid hilt of the British heavy cavalry sword of 1822–53 proved useful as a mailed fist that often did more damage than was possible with the blade. The Commanding Officer of the Greys commented after Balaklava on the inferior nature of his men's swords when used in the cut against the Russians' thick greatcoats; only when used in a downward cut against the head were they at all effective. Colonel Henry Darby-Griffith also noted that the Russians' greatcoats had turned the points of his men's swords and there were several recorded instances of swords buckling under the thrust. Essentially, the problem was that the Heavies' swords were compromise weapons intended to be adequate for both cut and thrust and, of course, not ideal for either. Even officers' swords were of better use for parade purposes than for fighting and, as soon as this was realised, a great many officers had top-quality fighting swords made for the Crimea, as well as equipping themselves with one or two of the new revolving pistols; the men did not have this option.



An officer’s charger, 2nd Dragoons; oil on canvas, artist unknown, 1870s.

A matter that affected the entire army, with the exception of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, was the ending of the purchase of commissions in 1871. All commissioned ranks up to and including that of lieutenant-colonel could be purchased and this system had been in operation since the creation of the standing army in the middle of the 17th century. Although, in theory, a system of prices had obtained, this operated frequently as little more than a guide and before 1860 cavalry commissions had always cost more than those in infantry regiments. Prior to 1860 the ‘advertised’ price of a cornet’s commission in the cavalry was £850 (about £49,750 in the early 21st century), a lieutenant’s £1,190 (about £69,950), a captain’s £3,225 (about £188,750) and a major’s £4,575 (about £266,775). After 1860 these prices all dropped by between one-third and one-quarter. By the post-Crimea period, too, rules had been introduced to ensure that an officer spent a specified time in each rank before being allowed to purchase his promotion. The ending of the system in 1871 cost the Government an estimated £8,000,000 (about £365,600,000 in the early 21st century) in compensation but began, gradually, the process of increased professionalism among commissioned ranks. The last officer of the Greys to purchase his commission was Cornet Montague George Johnstone, on 22 June 1870, and the first officer to join after the abolition of purchase was Cornet William Francis Firmstone, on 28 October 1871. On 1 November 1871, the ranks of cornet and ensign having been abolished in, respectively, the cavalry and the infantry of the line, Firmstone and Johnstone both became sub-lieutenants. In 1876 the rank of sub-lieutenant was replaced by that of second lieutenant, which was itself abolished in 1881, only to be reinstated in 1887. After staff duties as aidede-camp (ADC) to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1880, ‘special service’ in Bechuanaland 1884–85 and attachment as adjutant to the Lothians and Berwickshire Yeomanry 1887–92, Johnstone retired as a major in 1893; Firmstone was promoted lieutenant on 17 March 1874 and retired the following day.



Lieutenant John Torrens, 2nd Dragoons, and his men about to rescue the crew of the ship Robert Brown, off Kingstown, County Dublin, 28 October 1880; oil on canvas, artist unknown, c. 1881.

The Crimean War had other, longer-lasting, effects. As a result of the absence of the regular regiments of the army from Britain for the Crimean War and then the Indian Mutiny and the wars for Empire, auxiliary regiments were formed during the 1850s. The yeomanry, originally raised in rural areas in the 1790s but which had been in a state of suspended animation since the days of civil unrest in the 1830s, was re-established in the 1850s. Scotland had five regiments of yeomanry in 1860, most of which had an adjutant who had seen service in a regular cavalry regiment. By 1880 the number had dropped to four regiments, all of whose adjutants were attached from regular regiments, the adjutant of the East Lothian Yeomanry being Captain Patrick Sanderson of the Greys. It did not follow, however, that Greys' officers only served as adjutants of Scottish yeomanry regiments and so, also in 1880, Captain Edward Donnithorne was attached as adjutant to the Hertfordshire Yeomanry. This increased linking between regular regiments and their auxiliary comrades made for greatly improved efficiency among the latter and was part of a general rationalisation that had its most far-reaching effects among the infantry regiments under the reorganisation of 1881.

John Torrens as a captain, 2nd Dragoons, wearing the gold medal of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution on his right breast, 1884.

In 1866 the regiment’s long-used and famous soubriquet was officially recognised and, from being ‘2nd (Royal North British) Dragoons’, the regiment became ‘2nd (Royal North British) Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys)’. In 1877 the title changed again to ‘2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys)’. How long the ‘Greys’ soubriquet had been in use is not known but its earliest recorded use seems to have been in c. 1704.

In 1880, while the regiment was stationed in Dublin, Lieutenant John Torrens was supervising some soldiers on the rifle ranges adjacent to Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire), County Dublin, some 8 miles south of the city, and observed that a brigantine, the Robert Brown, had foundered in stormy seas and was in danger of sinking. Torrens collected some soldiers and put to sea in a boat that he had had built, eventually reaching the ship and rescuing the crew; for this exploit Torrens was awarded the gold medal of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Torrens rose to the rank of major in 1892 and, while serving as Band President, is thought to have introduced the regimental practice of the mounted kettledrummer wearing a white bearskin cap.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER FIVE

6th Dragoon Guards watering horses, South Africa, c. 1899–1900.

3RD DRAGOON GUARDS

In 1882 the 3rd Dragoon Guards left Ireland following a seven-year posting, little the worse for their experiences in an island that was coming slowly to boiling point, and were posted to Scotland for a year, after which the regiment embarked again for India. One hundred officers and men were detached as volunteers to join the 4th (Royal

Irish) and 7th (The Princess Royal’s) Dragoon Guards for the campaign in Egypt in 1882.

Campaigning in Egypt and the Sudan was to occupy the British army intermittently from 1882 until the end of the century, with renewed spasmodic involvement in that part of Africa until the Suez affair of 1956. As with the Suez operation, the conflict in 1882 was a result of British influence around and upon the Suez Canal, rather newer in 1882 than seventy-four years later but no less strategically important. The parallels between 1882 and 1956, superficially at least, are noteworthy. In 1882, Britain and France were propping up a decadent regime, that of the khedive, Mohammed Tewfik Pasha, which served their joint interests while not requiring any active involvement other than the occasional loan. Egyptian nationalist resentment against the khedive – who was a type of viceroy for the sultan of Turkey – and against British and French exploitation of Egyptian resources was orchestrated by Colonel Ahmed Arabi Bey: Arabi Bey was such a persistent threat to the existing regime in Egypt that in 1882 the British government reluctantly decided to send an expeditionary force to deal with him. In 1882, unlike in 1956, the French eventually decided not to become involved, so all the fighting devolved upon Britain. Maintenance of both supply lines and fresh-water resources was all-important, making the Suez Canal and its sweet-water canal early targets for acquisition by British forces. Since Arabi Bey did not either destroy or damage the Canal at the first appearance of British troops, the initial campaigning was aimed at securing viable strongpoints upon and around it. An important lock at Qassassin was secured by a troop of the 4th Dragoon Guards on 26 August 1882 and gradually the rest of a small detachment reinforced Qassassin. Eventually, the Egyptian insurgents decided that they should dislodge these soldiers and advanced in strength to do so, extending their line of infantry to overlap the small British force. Reinforcements were summoned by heliograph and arrived after dark to execute the famous ‘moonlight charge’ of the Household Cavalry, supported by the 7th Dragoon Guards, which completely routed the Egyptians. Lieutenant Henry Gribble was one of the 3rd Dragoon Guards officers who served in Egypt in 1882. Gribble apparently owned an ungovernable charger which had a propensity to run away with its rider and usually in the wrong direction; since he was the only officer killed in the Qassassin charge, his death may have been due to the excitability of his mount.

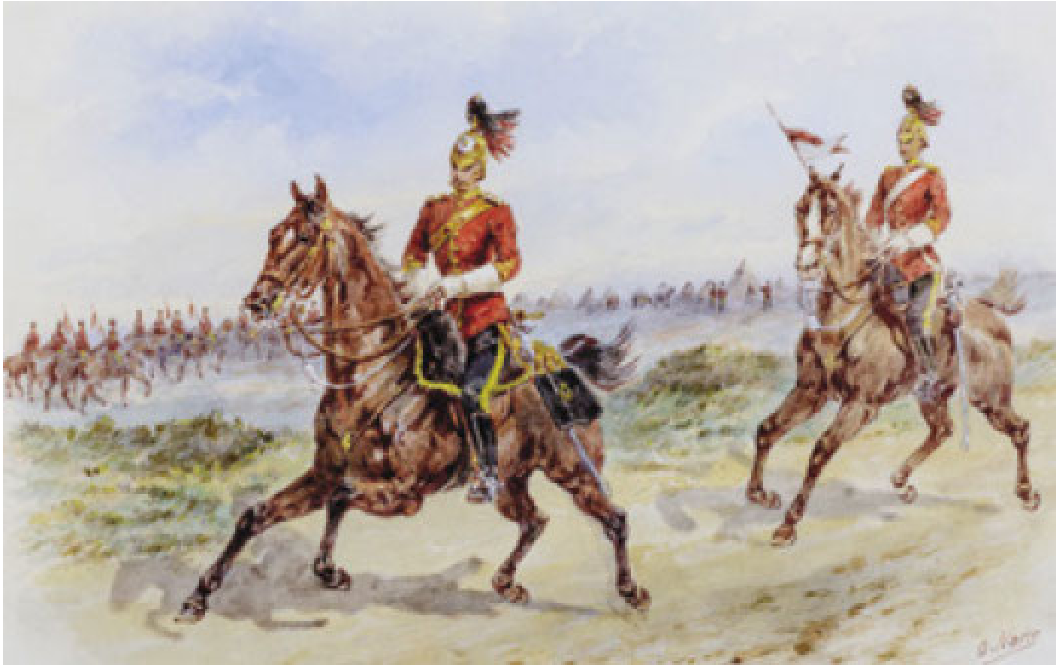
The Egyptian campaigns resulted in the untimely death of another officer with 3rd Dragoon Guards associations. Major General Sir Herbert Stewart KCB (1843–85) was brigade major in the Tel-el-Kebir campaign of 1882 and brigadier-general commanding the Desert Column (which included some Greys in its Camel Corps) in the Sudan in 1884–85; in 1873, as a captain, he had transferred to the regiment from the 37th (North Hampshire) Regiment of Foot. A Wykehamist, Stewart was one of the very few cavalry officers to attend the Staff College in 1877 and he was admitted as a student to the Inner Temple in the same year; these signs of his undoubted intelligence demonstrate his commitment to personal advancement in the army and paid off when he advanced from the rank of captain to that of major general in the six years 1879–85. In early 1880 he served as Military Secretary in South Africa to Lieutenant-General Sir Garnet Wolseley GCB GCMG (later Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley), who regarded him as the best staff officer he had known and made Stewart part of the 'Wolseley Ring' of ambitious and talented staff officers who benefited from Wolseley's patronage. Had Stewart not died from wounds received on the relief expedition to save General Gordon in Khartoum in 1885, he would probably have become a distinguished general officer.

Among the 3rd's officers to serve in Egypt in 1882 was Captain Frederick Wardrop, who was appointed aide-de-camp to Wolseley and who fought at Qassassin and Tel-el-Kebir. In the campaign of 1884–85 Wardrop was appointed Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master General to the Camel Corps and, serving with the Desert Column, was the only 3rd Dragoon Guards' officer to be present at Abu Klea. Wardrop ended his career, having commanded 12th Lancers and served as a military attaché, as a much-decorated colonel and CB.

The 3rd Dragoon Guards remained in India until 1892, playing polo, pig-sticking and enjoying all the benefits that military service in India offered at that period. In India, servants were more than plentiful for all ranks, pay was higher than at home – and went further – and the amount of daily training possible was restricted to what it was possible to carry out in the early morning, when the weather was coolest. The games and field sports most associated with cavalry regiments stationed in India were principally enjoyed by officers since a measure of extra income was needed to afford the ponies necessary for polo and pig-sticking. Polo had originated in Persia

(Iran) and been imported into India, via Afghanistan, in the medieval period; it gradually gained popularity with the British in India between 1859 and 1863, quickly caught on at home and the first inter-regimental game in Britain was played in 1870 at Aldershot between the 9th Lancers and the 10th Hussars. A local newspaper, reporting the game as ‘Hockey on Horseback’, judged the game to be admirably suited to the cavalry and showed an interest in the remarkably expressive language used by the players. While plentiful servants allowed time for recreation, they also encouraged lethargy and accompanying problems of alcoholism among officers and other ranks alike. During the hot season there was little escape from either boredom or excessive warmth; thirst was constant and slaking it easy and cheap. Most regiments posted to India rapidly founded a branch of the Army Temperance Association and established recreation rooms and cricket teams to provide alternatives to spending the days horizontal on a bunk with a bottle.

In 1892 the 3rd Dragoon Guards left India for Natal and was stationed in Pietermaritzburg for three years before returning to England in 1895. While in South Africa, Captain Andrew Nolan and two non-commissioned officers served on detached duty with the Bechuanaland Police during the Matabele Rising of 1893. The regiment was stationed in south-east England until 1898, when it moved to York for a year and then to Ireland in 1899. The Home Rule campaign that was to convulse Ireland for the next two decades was well under way, with the various factions translating political discussion into street violence, and the 3rd remained in Ireland until January 1901, when the campaign in South Africa – which had been thought to be over – demanded its services.



An officer of 3rd Dragoon Guards, followed by his orderly, on exercise; watercolour by Orlando Norie, 1892–1902.

The 3rd Dragoon Guards regimental polo team for the Inter-Regimental Tournament, India, 1892. The officers are, left to right, Captain Stephen Walter, Major Frederick Dimond, Lieutenant Francis Ryder and (seated on ground) Lieutenant Oswald Smith-Bingham.

The Second South African War had broken out in 1899 and as a result of the emergency the regiment's establishment was increased to 696 of all ranks, with 465 horses. Throughout the next year or so, drafts of men were sent to South Africa to serve in other units and, in March 1900, the regimental establishment was further increased to 883 of all ranks.

The second stage of the war was really a monumental mopping-up operation: all the major battles had been fought and all the sieges relieved. The prospect for the campaign was daunting since operations had to be conducted across hundreds of thousands of square miles of veldt and against an enemy whose familiarity with the terrain, the climate and the most modern small arms technology made him not only formidable but also a more serious proposition than anything faced by the British army in the previous forty years. It was a war which lent itself to cavalry operations since speed of movement and versatility were both essential. The Boer 'commandos' – mounted on small, swift ponies, able to survive on the parsimonious contents of their saddlebags, and expertly accurate long-range shots with their Mauser and Mannlicher magazine rifles – caused Britain's cavalry soldiers to relearn the art of war. The British regular cavalry was accompanied for the campaign in South Africa by quickly raised units of mounted infantry and companies of Imperial Yeomanry from home and by regiments of Indian cavalry and Australian light horse from the Empire; the familiarity of the Indian and Australian contingents with similar terrain and conditions made them a valuable asset.

The drum horse, 3rd Dragoon Guards, April 1900.

On arrival in South Africa in 1901, the 3rd Dragoon Guards joined a column commanded by Colonel Edward Bethune of the 16th Lancers; this column was to spend some time in pursuit of the Boer general Christiaan de Wet and his forces. The function of Bethune's force, allied with that of similar forces, was gradually to push the Boers back into a space with a guardable perimeter, behind the line of blockhouses and barbed wire which was being constructed to deny them access to supply routes and so starve them into surrender. Rounding up Boer 'commandos' might be likened to trying to eat soup with a fork and the column was fairly constantly on the march and regularly in contact with the enemy. Raids by small mobile forces were found to be far more effective than ponderous encircling moves by large ones. On one of the former, Captain Oswald Smith-Bingham led a squadron of the regiment a day's march, which continued through the night without a halt, and captured a Boer convoy at dawn. Lieutenant Stanley Paddon had a similar, if smaller, success shortly afterwards. Captain Smith-Bingham had earlier been created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for leadership during an uncharacteristically close-order combat with some Boers who had attacked the column of which the 3rd were acting as rearguard. He subsequently commanded the regiment from 1912 until 1916 and retired as a brigadier-general.

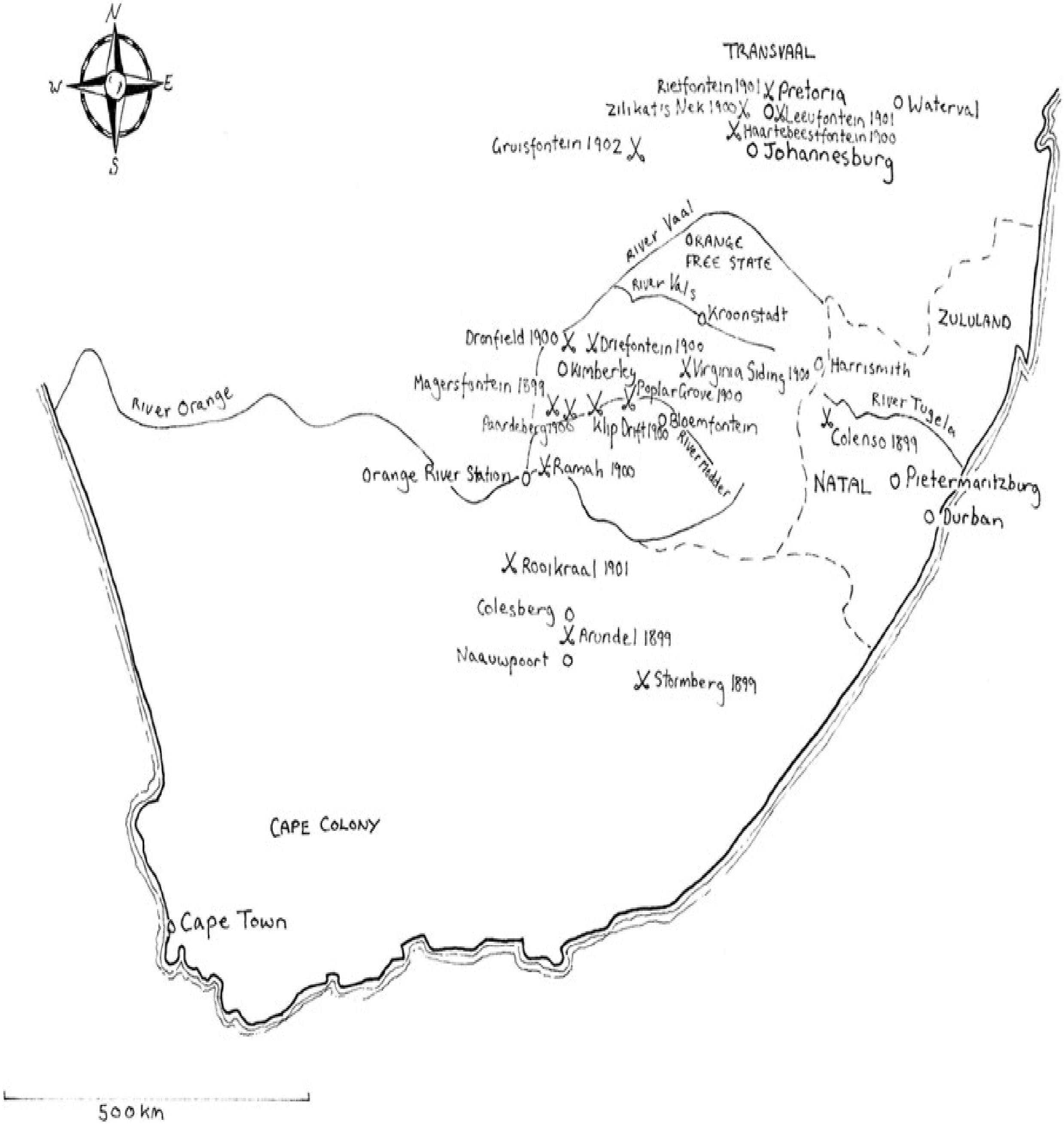
The Maxim gun detachment, 3rd Dragoon Guards, in action, South Africa, 1901.

The regiment's Commanding Officer from 1897 until 1900 was Colonel Ulick de Burgh who, in 1900, was appointed to command the commission sent to the United States to purchase remounts for the war. He and his commission were responsible for the provision of quality horses, which arrived in South Africa before the end of the war. These supplies ensured that the Boers, hemmed in, hungry and exhausted, eventually had no alternative but to surrender.

At the end of 1901 the 3rd was sent to Natal and then to Zululand in pursuit of General Louis Botha, one of the last Boer leaders to be captured. He eluded the column, however, and the regiment returned to Harrismith in the eastern Orange Free State where, apart from some time spent working on the blockhouse line, it passed the remainder of the war. The regiment lost two officers and sixty-one other ranks killed during the war.

The wheelwright's shop, 3rd Dragoon Guards, on the veldt, South Africa, 1901.

The South African War 1899–1902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W
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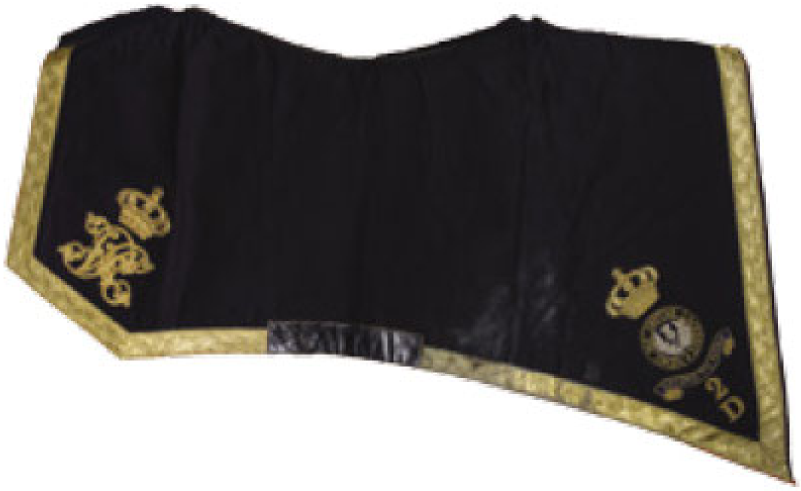
TRANSVAAL
Rietfontein 1901
Pretoria
Zilikat's Nek 1900
Leeufontein 1901
Waterval
Haartebeestfontein 1900
Gruisfontein 1902
Johannesburg
River Vaal
ORANGE FREE STATE
River Vals
Kroonstadt
ZULULAND
Dronfield 1900
Driefontein 1900
Kimberley
Virginia Siding 1900
Harrismith
Magersfontein 1899
Poplar Grove 1900
River Tugela
River Orange
Paardeberg 1900
Klip Drift 1900
Bloemfontein
Colenso 1899
River Modder
Orange River Station
Ramah 1900
NATAL
Pietermaritzburg
Durban
Rooikraal 1901
Colesberg
Arundel 1899
Naauwpoort
Stormberg 1899
CAPE COLONY
Cape Town
500 km

In 1881, plaited gold shoulder-cords were introduced for Full Dress tunics and stable jackets, while frock coats and cloaks were fitted with cloth shoulder-straps. Badges of rank were transferred from the collar to the shoulders, and the system of indicating rank changed at the same time. Second lieutenants now wore no badge, lieutenants wore one star and captains two. For majors and colonels the system was as worn today.

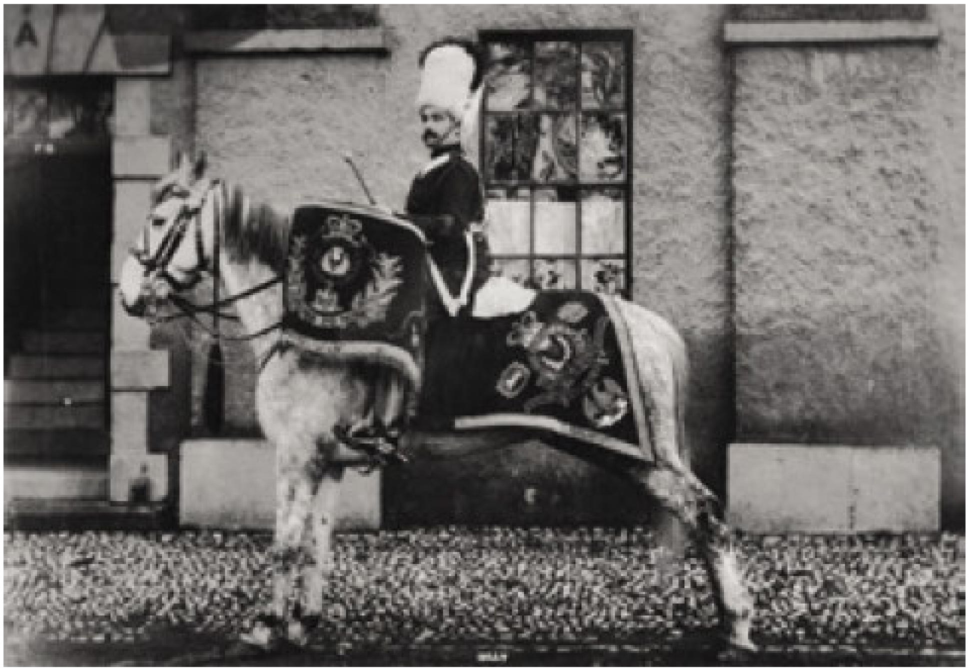
At around this time, field caps replaced pillbox forage caps for active service and peace manoeuvres. For most regiments these caps were initially of blue cloth, decorated with narrow gold braid and with folding flaps. However those of the Carabiniers, worn in the Second Afghan War of 1878–80, were white with blue flaps (see page 111), and other regiments also gradually acquired caps in more distinctive colours. With some changes of style, field caps remained in routine use until 1902, the final pattern for most units being the 'Austrian' pattern, with its flaps buttoned together in front.

By 1883, black leather sabretaches had been restored for officers and a new item had made its appearance. This was the patrol jacket, a short coat trimmed with black braid similar to that on the frock coat. Although it was intended to be worn as an alternative to the latter, group photographs suggest that both items were often in use at the same time. The Carabiniers' patrol jackets, unusually, were waist-length, and trimmed not only with black braid but also with black astrakhan.

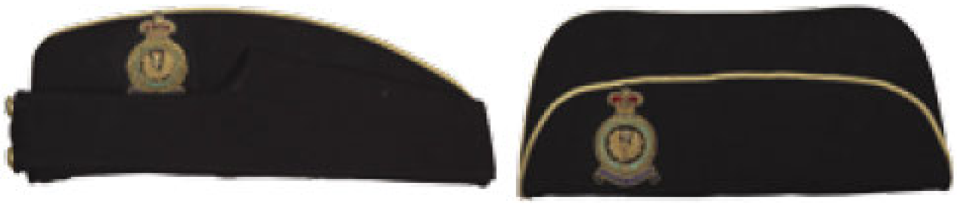
In 1889 a white bearskin cap was first photographed being worn by the Greys' kettledrummer (above right). After 1892 it appears to have been in abeyance until revived for the 1937 coronation. The original white bearskin was at one time believed to have been presented by Tsar Nicholas II, but there is no evidence for this.



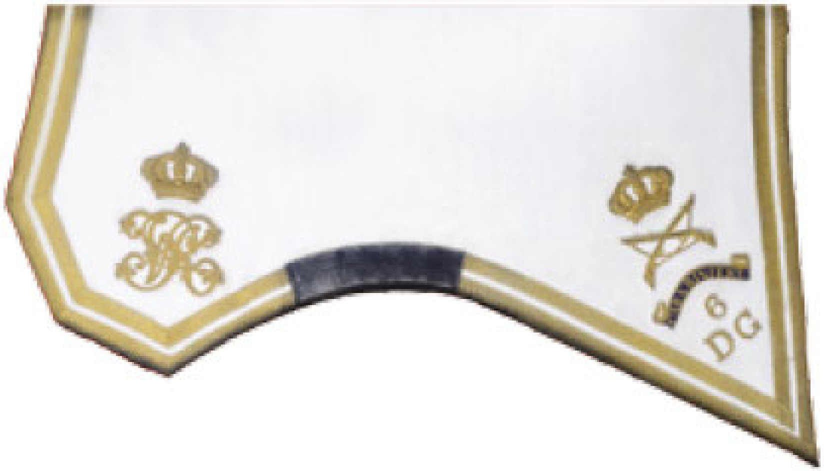
Officers' shabraques, 2nd Dragoons (left) and 6th Dragoon Guards c. 1895, shortly before shabraques were abolished.



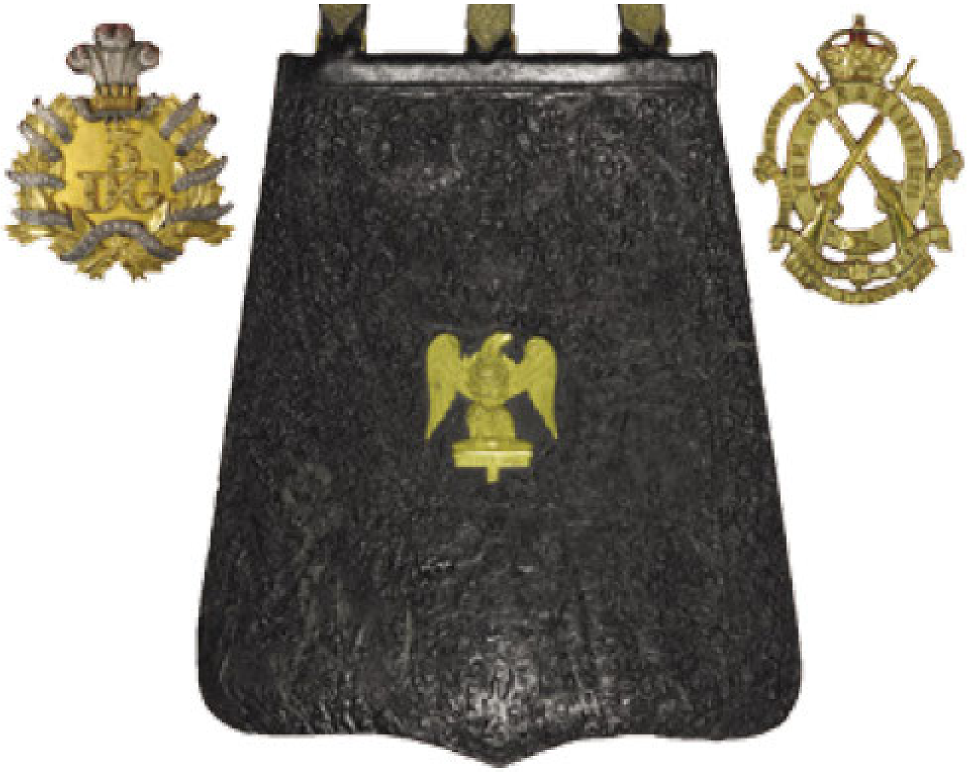
The kettledrummer, thought to be Drummer Booth, wearing the white bearskin and riding drum horse Billy, 2nd Dragoons, 1892.



Officer’s field cap, 2nd Dragoons c. 1885.



‘Austrian’ pattern field cap of Tsar Nicholas II.



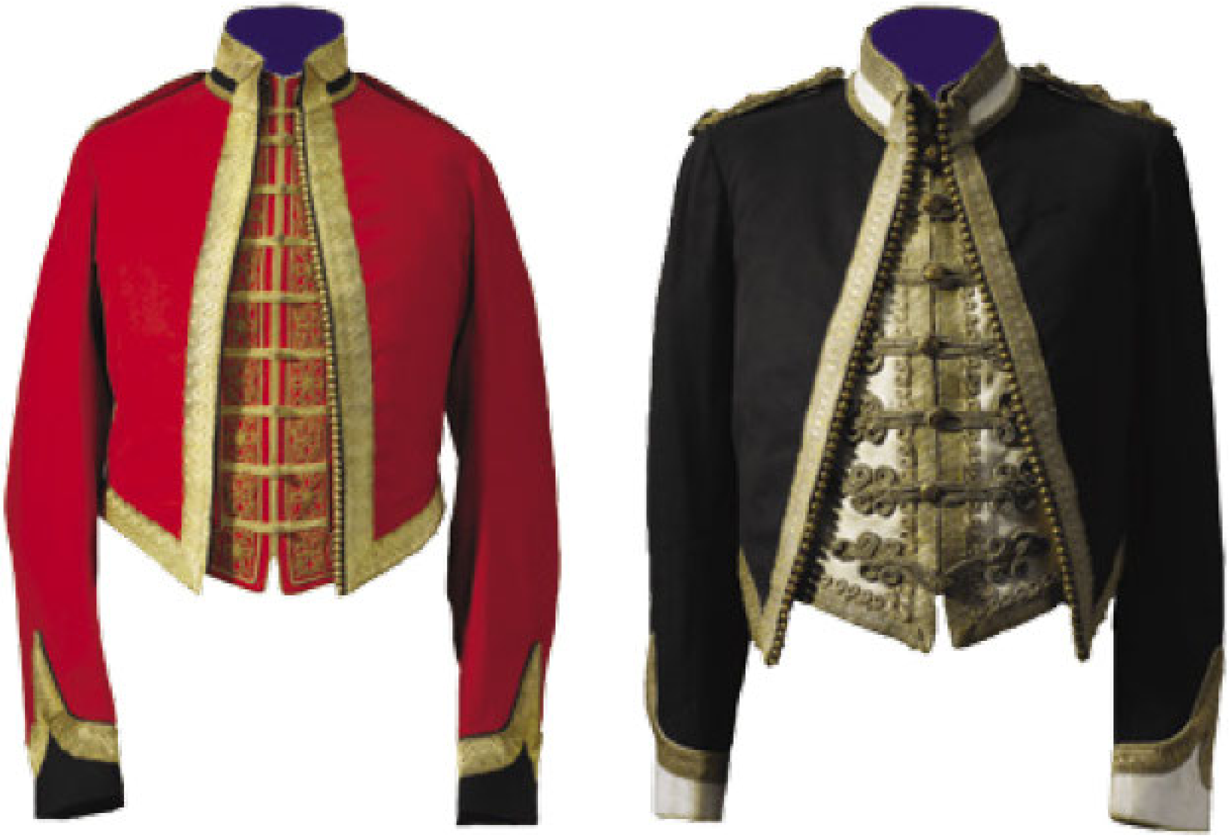
Sabretache, 2nd Dragoons, and sabretache badges, 3rd Dragoon Guards and 6th Dragoon Guards c. 1900.

For some time officers had worn their stable jackets open over a waistcoat as Mess Dress. The 1874 Dress Regulations contain the first mention of this practice for heavy cavalry. In due course, every regiment adopted its own individual pattern of waistcoat.

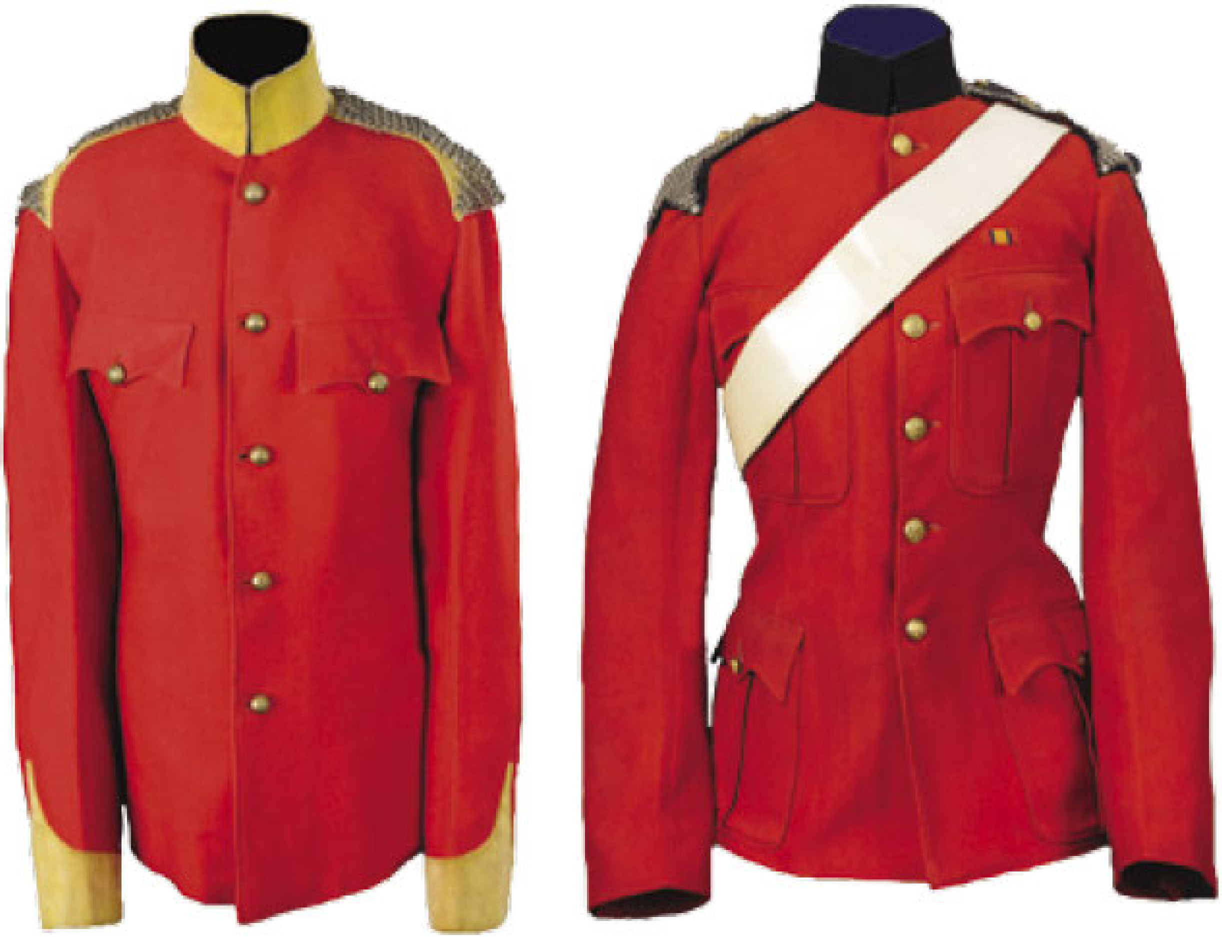
In the next decade, as it became less likely that Full Dress uniform would be worn on active service, another article of clothing was introduced for outdoor wear. This was initially described as the serge patrol jacket, but was later known as a frock. It was of the same colour as the Full Dress tunic, but slightly shorter and with external pockets. Originally plain, it eventually acquired a collar, shoulder-straps and sometimes cuffs, of the regimental facing colour. In 1896, shaped patches of chain mail, usually on cloth backing of the facing colour, were added to the shoulders as a protection against sword cuts.

As the end of the century approached, economies began to be made in uniform. For heavy cavalry officers the most significant reduction before the outbreak of the South African War was the abolition of the shabraque in 1897, but this was only a foretaste of the massive changes that were to follow in the next decade.

Charles Webb



Mess jackets, over distinctive regimental waistcoats, 2nd Dragoons and 6th Dragoon Guards c. 1900.



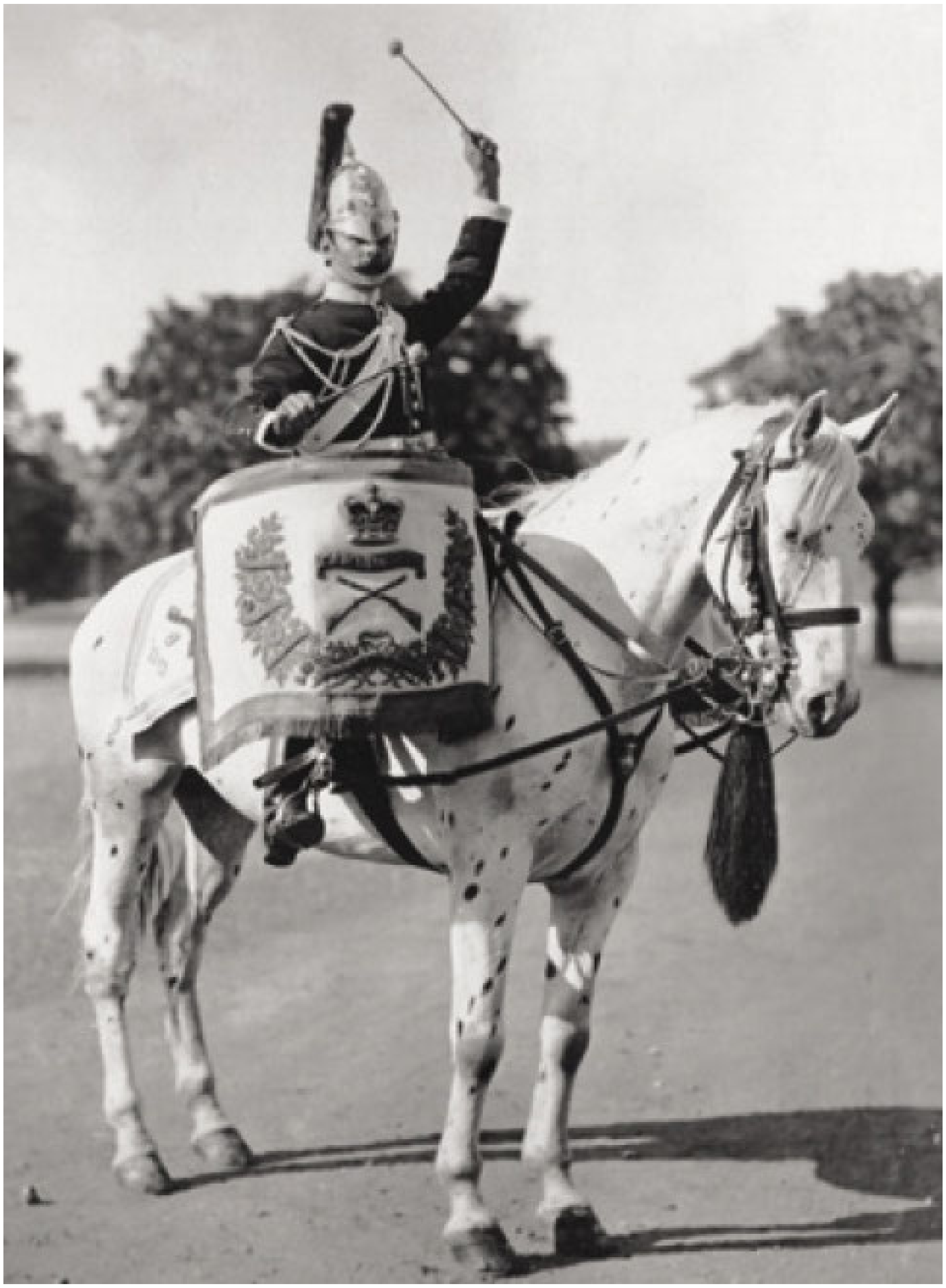
Officers' red serge patrol jackets or frocks, 3rd Dragoon Guards and 2nd Dragoons 1896–1902.

6TH DRAGOON GUARDS

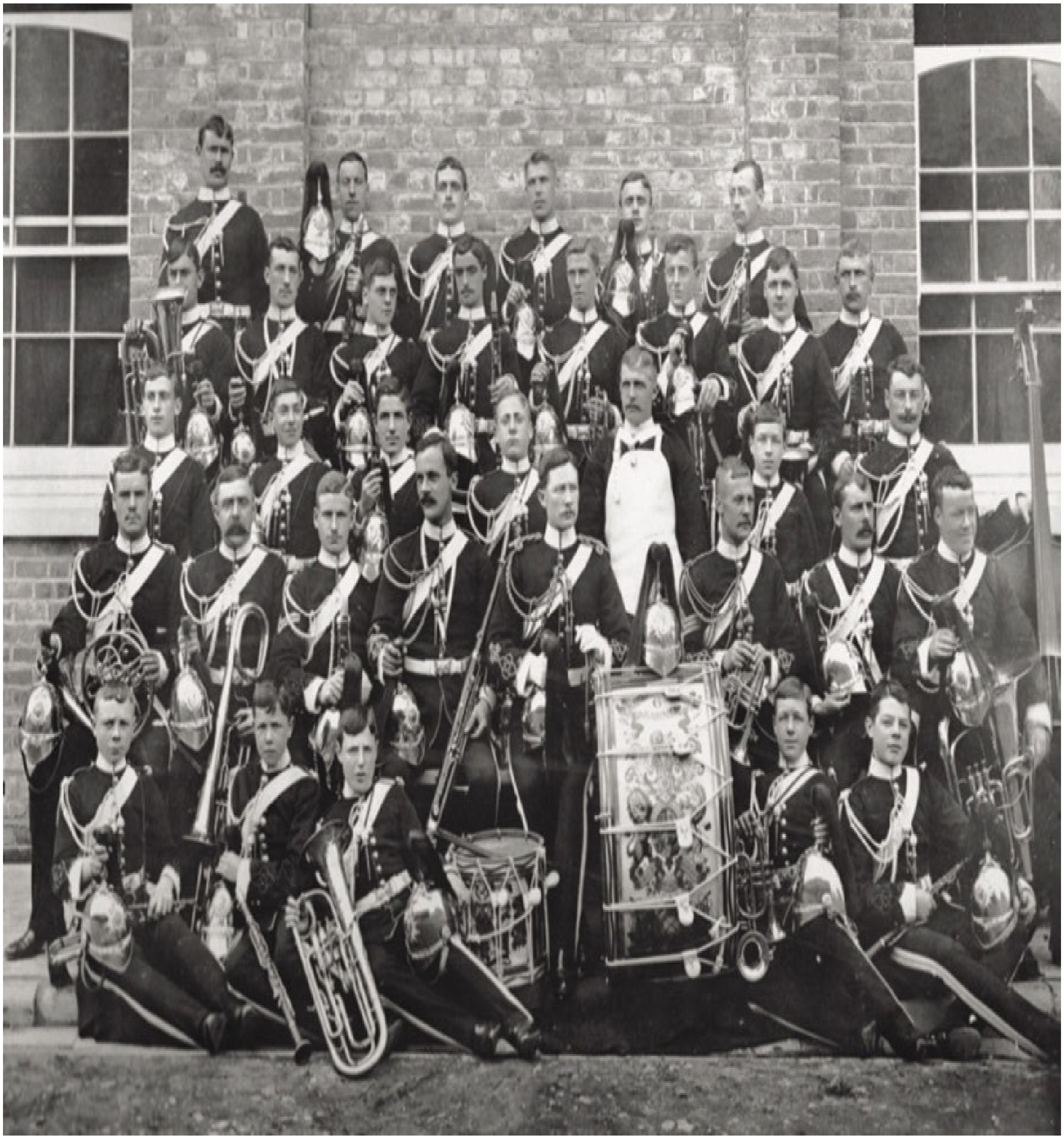
By 1881 the regiment had been in Sialkot, bordering Kashmir in the north-eastern Punjab, for a year and it remained there until 1885, taking part in exercises aimed at reminding it of the rigours of frontier warfare during winter – the season in which manoeuvres were most comfortably conducted. In March 1885 the Carabiniers participated in

a review in Rawalpindi, the Aldershot of India, and the following year changed station to Mhow, south of Indore in the Bombay presidency, where the regiment was warned to prepare itself for a return home. The regiment left India from Bombay in October 1888 and arrived at Portsmouth in November after a journey that would earlier have taken three months or more. The speed of this voyage, made by steamship and via the Suez Canal, indicates just how much these two factors shortened the time for the journey to and from India – an example of the strategic importance of the canal for traffic between Britain and India. On the Carabiniers' return home, the regiment was 200 men over its home establishment and therefore many soldiers had to volunteer to transfer to the reserve. Cavalry regiments during the 1880s and 1890s operated on one of three establishments: low, medium and high. Eight of the regiments stationed at home in 1898 had to be on the high establishment – in order to be ready to move overseas for active service at once. As a newly returned regiment, the Carabiniers had its establishment progressively cut until, in 1890, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel William MacGeorge, complained that his regimental numbers were so low that the everyday business of grooming the horses had become very difficult, the regiment having 122 more horses than men.

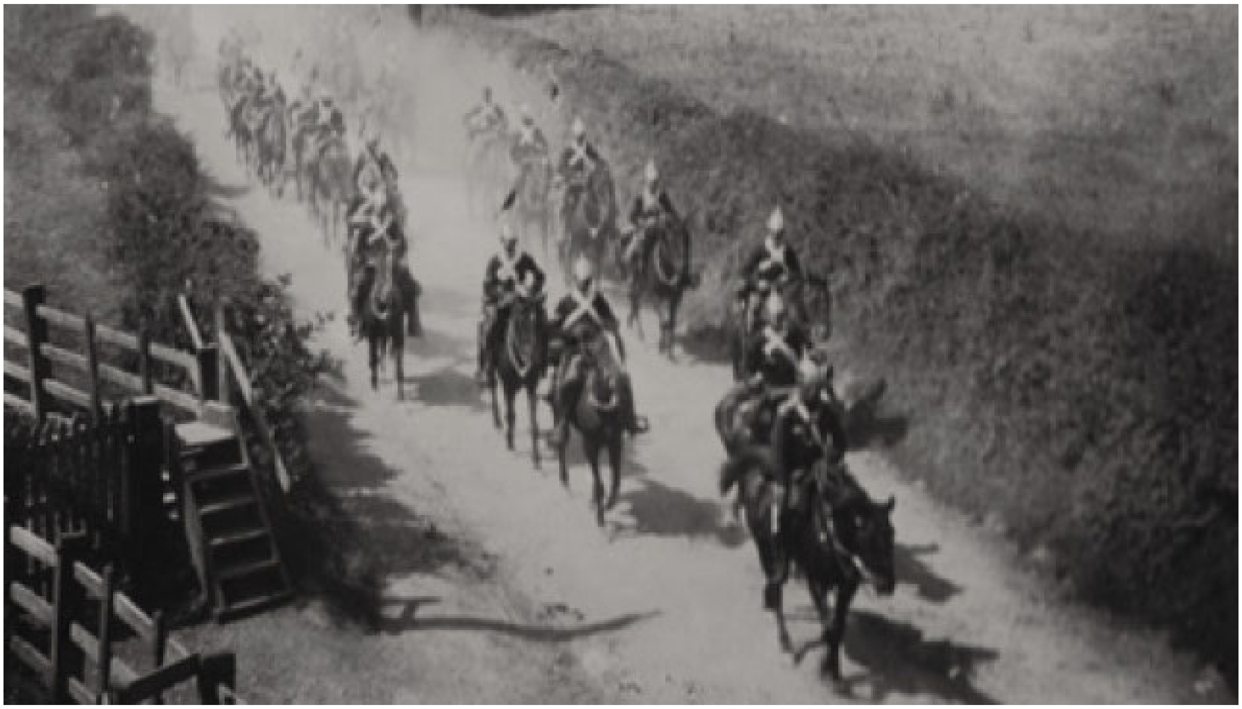
Following its arrival in England in 1888, the Carabiniers moved from Portsmouth to Shorncliffe in Kent and in 1890 was sent north to Birmingham, Bradford and Leeds, where the practice had become established of using soldiers in support of the police during the riots which accompanied strikes and lockouts during periods of industrial unrest. Remaining in that part of England until 1891, the regiment was then sent north to Edinburgh, providing an escort to Queen Victoria in Derby on the way, and was quartered in Piershill Barracks, with two troops being detached to Glasgow's Maryhill Barracks. In 1893, the regiment moved to York; Yorkshire was riven by coal strikes in 1893 and the Carabiniers sent detachments from York to add weight to the police presence in the mining districts. In 1897, having moved to Aldershot, the 6th was placed on the high establishment and, accordingly, received recruits and horses from other regiments. This hint that the regiment was to hold itself in readiness for an overseas posting bore fruit in 1899, when the South African War began, but in 1897 the enlarged regiment formed part of the Aldershot Cavalry Brigade which paraded in review before Queen Victoria to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee.



The drum horse, 6th Dragoon Guards, 1898, ridden by Private Vokins.



The Band, 6th Dragoon Guards, 1898. The bandmaster, Mr A. E. Joiner, is shown seated with his left hand on the hilt of a mamelukehilted sword to the left of the bass drum.



6th Dragoon Guards on exercise, Salisbury Plain, 1898; note the cloud of dust.

6th Dragoon Guards ‘gallop past’ in the Long Valley, Aldershot, 1898.

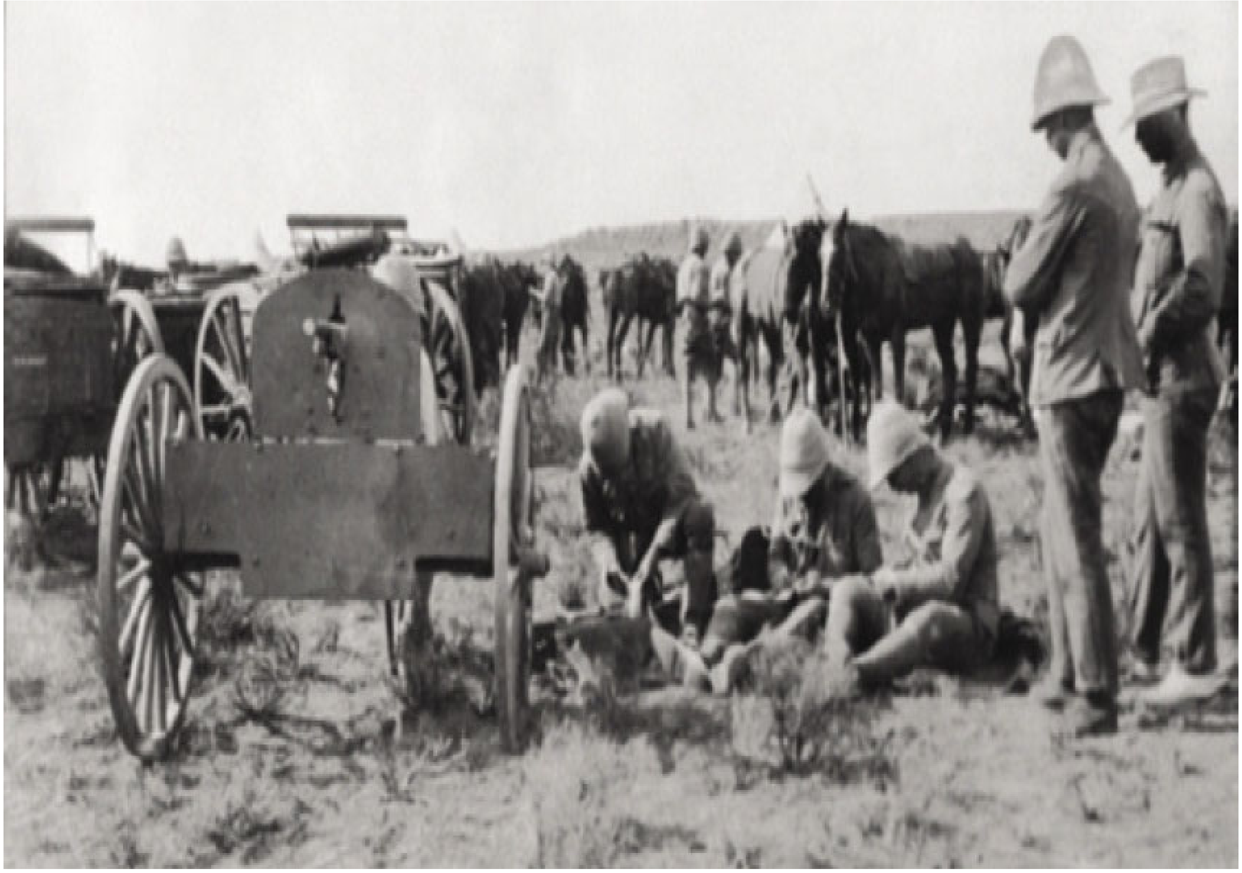
Mobilisation began on 7 October 1899 and the regiment was reported as fit for service and ready to embark by 20 October; the war had begun with rejection of a Boer ultimatum on 11 October. Embarking on 3 and 8 November, the two wings of the Carabiniers arrived near Cape Town on 30 November, having lost twenty-two horses on the voyage out. After only four days’ acclimatisation the regiment was ordered to the front, to Naauwpoort on the northern border of Cape Colony, travelling the 570 miles by troop train. Shortly after it arrived, the war, which had not been going Britain’s way at all, took a dramatic turn for the worse with defeats at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso. The regiment was ordered to join the Cavalry Division commanded by Major General John French, one of whose ancestors had commanded the Carabiniers 1811–23, and it travelled by train from Naauwpoort to attack Boer positions in and around Arundel, south of Colesberg on the border of the Orange Free State. Arundel was occupied on 7 December by the Carabiniers, commanded by Colonel Thomas Porter, and the regiment then spent some time on patrol along the Arundel–Colesberg railway line, reconnoitring Boer positions but deliberately not becoming involved in too much action. This tactic was a result of orders designed to minimise casualties which, because of the Boers’ superior marksmanship, tended to be unnecessarily heavy when cavalry attacked Boer positions by frontal assault. On one of these patrols, Lieutenant Robert Collis led a small group of men through hostile territory and so distinguished himself by his concern for their safety when under fire from a party of Boers – whom he had assumed to be friendly – that he was awarded the DSO in 1901. Operations around Colesberg resulted in the town being besieged and the Carabiniers were withdrawn, with the rest of the cavalry, to the relief of Kimberley.

6th Dragoon Guards ‘practising for a display’, Aldershot, 1899; note the ‘Sudanese tribesmen’, one of whom appears to be dead.

On the way to Kimberley the regiment was engaged in a number of small actions. In one of these, at Ramah, near the Orange River Station, south of Kimberley and just inside the Orange Free State border, the presence of mind of Sergeant W. J. Bowman prevented the regiment’s Maxim machine gun from being lost to the Boers; Bowman was mentioned in despatches published in The London Gazette on 8 February 1901. The Carabiniers were placed in the 1st Brigade of the Cavalry Division, brigaded with the Greys and a squadron of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, but did not march on Kimberley with the vanguard of the division, being ordered to wait for and escort the transport column. The transport arrived on the night of 13 February 1900 and left immediately, marching through the night towards Kimberley with its escort of Carabiniers. Once the regiment and the transport reached Klip Drift, on the Modder River 25 miles south of Kimberley, it rendezvoused with the remainder of the division and relinquished its escort duties. The division, preceded by its two batteries of horse artillery, marched on Kimberley on 15 February; en route, it engaged

Boers entrenched north of Klip Drift and carried the positions with a cavalry charge by brigades, the swiftness of the horses – and the concealing dust thrown up by their hooves – making them difficult targets for the Boer marksmen. Total casualties on both sides were relatively small but, seen as a cavalry charge against rifle fire, the action at Klip Drift came to be regarded by protagonists of the mounted arm as a classic example of the correct use of cavalry. It has to remain questionable whether the division's three brigades would have achieved so much without artillery support or the covering nature of dust clouds but the fact remained that the objective was targeted and overcome in a manner that made John French's reputation as a leader of cavalry. The Boers having taken to their heels, the road to Kimberley was open and the Carabiniers led the cavalry's advance on the town. Once the town was occupied, Colonel Porter, who had been given command of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, was made its garrison commander.

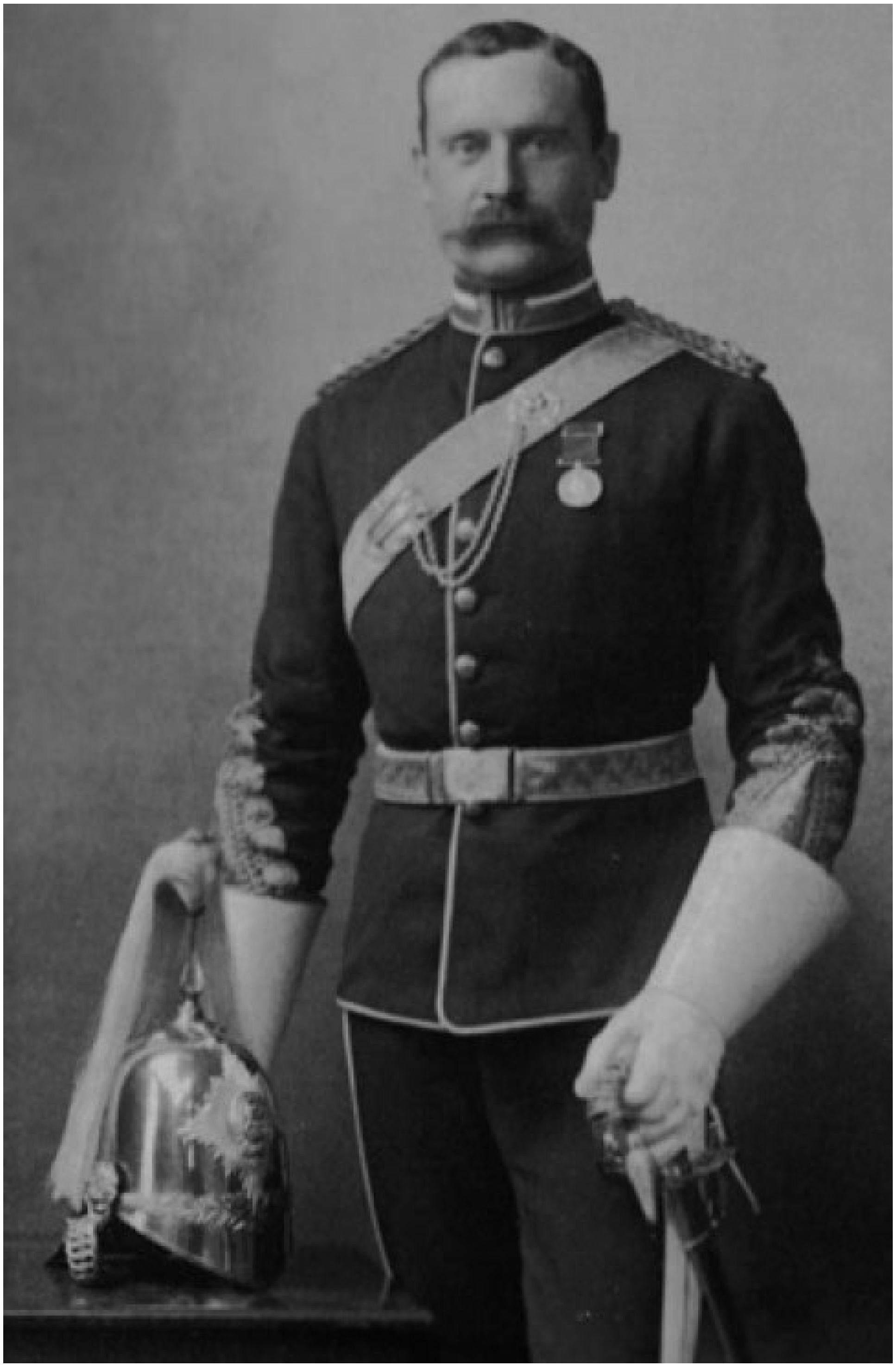
Mr Stratton, the Regimental Sergeant-Major, 6th Dragoon Guards, in South Africa, 1899.



‘Filling belts for Colt Gun’, South Africa c. 1899–1900. Soldiers of 6th Dragoon Guards are filling the cartridge belts needed to feed the firing mechanism of the Colt-Browning M1895 .303 gas-operated machine gun, seen on its wheeled carriage, next to them.

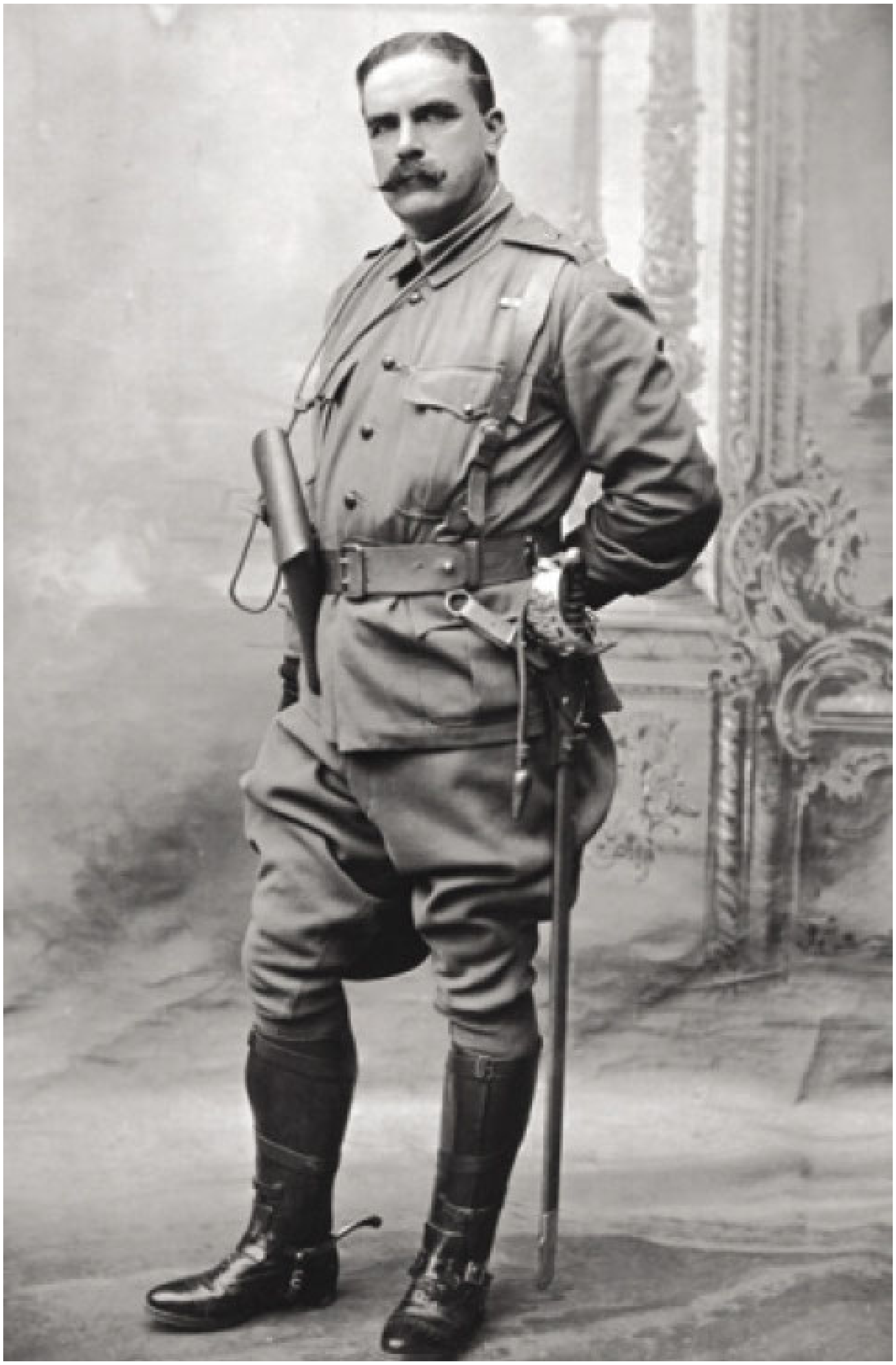
The charge at Klip Drift was carried out in true cavalry style, with the front rank of each squadron being armed with lances as well as with swords and carbines. This experiment of arming the front rank of all cavalry regiments, except hussars, with lances was begun in 1892 as a direct result of the usefulness of the lance in open country and against an unconventional enemy. Although the actual effectiveness of lances was limited, except against dismounted troops or those lying down, the effect on enemy morale seems to have been considerable and so, until the South African War turned into a manoeuvring stalemate, lances and swords were retained. Once the war had taken that turn, the lances were returned to the armoury and the cavalry soldier’s sole weapons became the carbine and the sword – neither of which was a match for the rifles of the Boers.

Following the occupation of Kimberley, the Boer forces were given little choice but to return to the interior of the Orange Free State. The Boer general Piet Cronje headed east from his base at Magersfontein, south of Kimberley, towards Bloemfontein but was caught at Paardeberg, where he was forced to surrender on 27 February 1900 after being bottled up by a series of skirmishing deployments on the part of the cavalry. Gradually the Boer forces were forced back along the Modder River towards Bloemfontein, fighting actions at Poplar Grove and Driefontein on the way. At Driefontein Major Alexander Sprot of the Carabiniers led five squadrons under the command of Brigadier-General Robert Broadwood, commanding the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, in a charge against entrenched Boer positions, which led the Boers to surrender. Bloemfontein was occupied in March and the Boers went over to guerrilla warfare.



Alexander Sprot (1853–1929) as major, 6th Dragoon Guards, 1898. Having joined the regiment in 1874, Sprot served in Afghanistan 1879–80 and in South Africa 1899–1902, commanding the Carabiniers 1900–

04 and being twice mentioned in despatches. He later served in the First World War, during which he was, again, twice mentioned in despatches, appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) and awarded the French Croix de Guerre. He later became a baronet and MP.



Thomas Cole Porter (1851–1938), as Lieutenant-Colonel and Brevet Colonel, 6th Dragoon Guards, on the point of embarking for the South African War, 1899. Porter joined the regiment in 1873 and served in

Afghanistan 1879–80. Once in South Africa, he was appointed Brigadier-General to command the 1st Cavalry Brigade, ceding command of the regiment to Alexander Sprot. He was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in 1900.

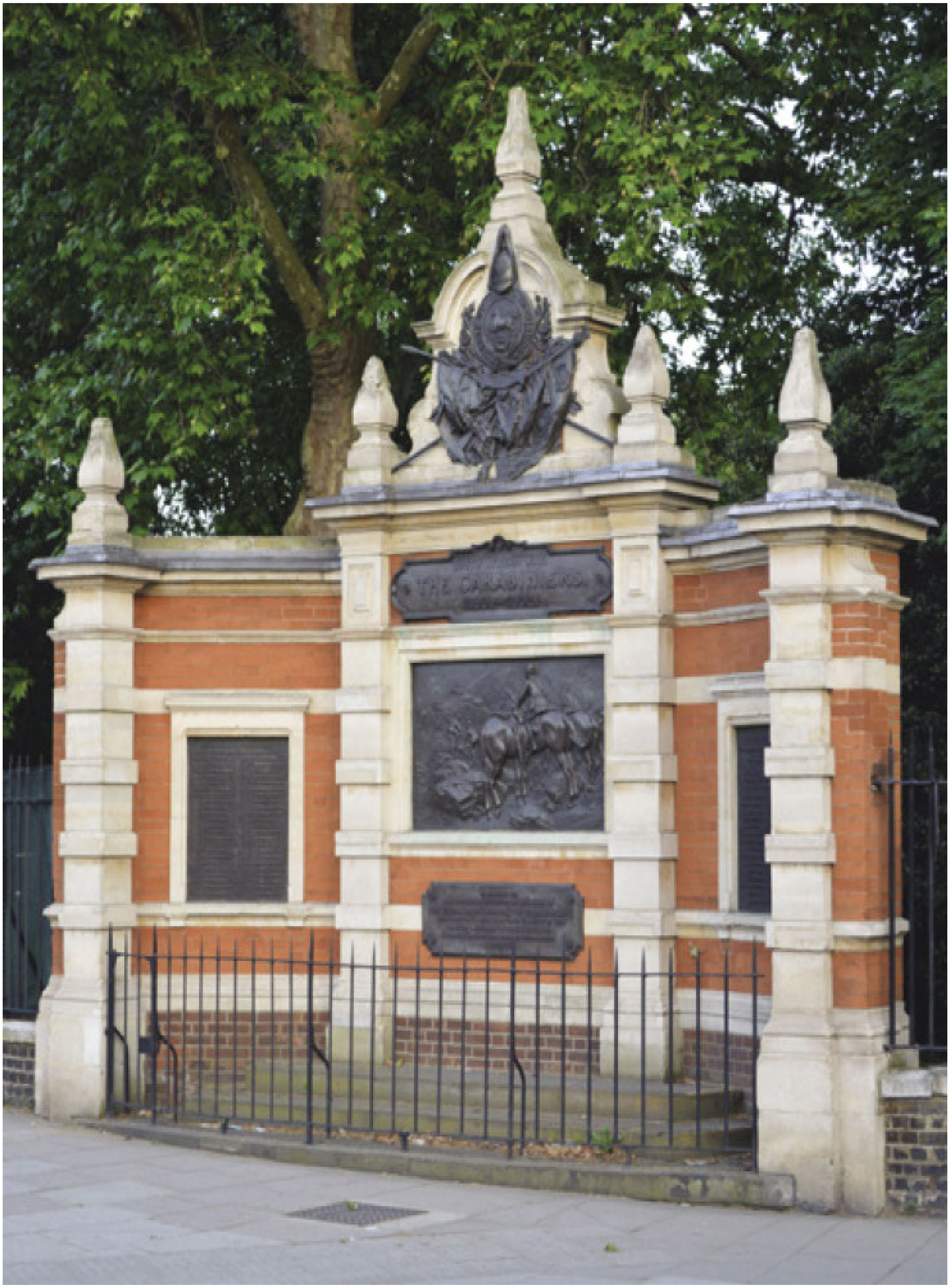
Lieutenant Noel Calvert, 6th Dragoon Guards, in May 1900, shortly after being commissioned; he was killed in action in October that year.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade, still commanded by Colonel Porter of the Carabiniers, spent the next month or so in small reconnaissance operations, which usually resulted in skirmishes of varying sizes. At the beginning of May 1900 it formed the advance guard of the main column of an army commanded by Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, which left Bloemfontein as part of Roberts's march on Pretoria, the Boer capital. The 1st Cavalry Brigade did not remain constantly with the main army but spent some time protecting its flanks as it advanced. Action at Virginia Siding, northeast of Bloemfontein, involved A and C Squadrons of the regiment in a concentrated firefight in which their carbines were out-ranged by the rifles of the Boers; only the rapid deployment of horse artillery prevented a serious setback. Captain Charles Elworthy, commanding C Squadron, and four other ranks were killed during the action; nine men were wounded.

A week later, the Carabiniers occupied the surrendered and evacuated town of Kroonstadt and on 24 May the cavalry crossed into the Transvaal, heartland of Boer territory, of which Pretoria and Johannesburg were the principal cities. Lieutenant William Rundle of the regiment acted as galloper between the cavalry and the main army under Lord Roberts, which was still at Kroonstadt, and was mentioned for his services in the same Gazette as was Sergeant Bowman. When Roberts was ready to move to Johannesburg, the cavalry led the advance on the left flank of his army and the Carabiniers encountered little action until 27 May when, at Hartebeestfontein, the regiment attacked Boer positions covering the route to Johannesburg. The town capitulated at the end of May and, with the regiment as part of the vanguard, the Cavalry Division moved off towards Pretoria, encountering resistance most of the way. Pretoria surrendered on 5 June and the 1st Cavalry Brigade released 3,500 British prisoners of war incarcerated in Waterval. Between June and October 1900 the Carabiniers continued in the role of reconnaissance troops and skirmishers, being frequently on outpost duty and often in action at all hours with sniping Boers. Lieutenant Noel Calvert, an Australian who had rowed at number two in the victorious Cambridge boat in the 1899 Boat Race, was killed when he and a small section of the regiment forming part of the rearguard were ambushed.

In the New Year the Carabiniers left the 1st Cavalry Brigade, which was disbanded as the nature of the war changed in style from semi-conventional to outright guerrilla, and joined a mixed force commanded by Colonel Edmund Allenby, later Field Marshal Viscount Allenby. Allenby's column pursued forces of Boers as fast as it could but was limited in its effectiveness by its size and by its slow-moving infantry element. Allenby, who had originally been commissioned in the 6th Dragoons, was a sound, if not spectacular, leader of his column. Engaged in gradually mopping up Boer forces, themselves fragmentary, he took few risks but plodded along, never losing an action and eventually doing just what was wanted: containing the enemy. Exercising the 'cavalry spirit' was left to certain of his cavalry officers, most notable among them being Major Henry Leader (1865–1934) of the Carabiniers. Commanding C Squadron, Leader lost few opportunities of getting at the enemy, often by forced marches and sudden swoops and occasionally by frontal cavalry charges upon entrenched positions: he distinguished himself at Rooikraal in February 1901, at Ermelo in April and at Leeufontein in May. In command of the 1st Scottish Horse, a recently raised yeomanry unit, from 1 February 1901, Leader led his new regiment, consisting of four squadrons, in an attack on Gruisfontein in the western Transvaal on 5 February 1902. Complete surprise was achieved and the entire camp of Kommandant Sarel Alberts captured; Leader was mentioned in despatches as a result. Leader commanded the regiment between 1905 and 1909, commanded the 1st Indian Cavalry Division 1914–17, retired as a major general with a CB in 1920 and was Colonel of the Carabiniers, and joint Colonel of the amalgamated regiment, from 1917 until 1925.

The regiment continued with its rounding-up and containing activities for the remainder of 1901, being involved in fighting at Rietfontein in July and elsewhere in the Transvaal in August and September. Peace was signed at the end of May 1902 and the regiment left Durban for Madras on 15 August. Its losses for the war, in which it had been heavily engaged from beginning to end, were six officers and sixty-four other ranks killed.


THE CARABINIERS

The memorial to the seventy officers, NCOs and men of 6th Dragoon Guards who were killed or died on active service during the South African War 1899–1902. It was erected on Chelsea Embankment near the north end of Chelsea Bridge, London, and dedicated in 1906, its bronze central plaque being by Alfred Adrian Jones MVO, a cavalry veterinary surgeon who became a sculptor specialising in equestrian statues.

ROYAL SCOTS GREYS

In 1881 the regiment was stationed in Dublin; it returned to Scotland in 1884. Late in 1884, an expedition was mounted from Egypt to go to the rescue of Major General Charles Gordon CB (1833–85), who was besieged in the Sudanese city of Khartoum by Sudanese tribes who were followers of the Mahdi, a Muslim religious leader. General Lord Wolseley of Cairo, who – as Lieutenant-General Sir Garnet Wolseley GCB GCMG – had led the Egyptian expedition in 1882, was appointed to lead and coordinate the Gordon relief expedition. As part of his planning, Wolseley formed a Camel Corps to act as the supporting mounted element within his land force, the Desert Column, which was to get to Khartoum overland – through the Bayuda Desert – while his River Column approached via the River Nile. Wolseley gave command of the Camel Corps, in the rank of brigadier, to Herbert Stewart, who had served in the 3rd Dragoon Guards 1873–79.

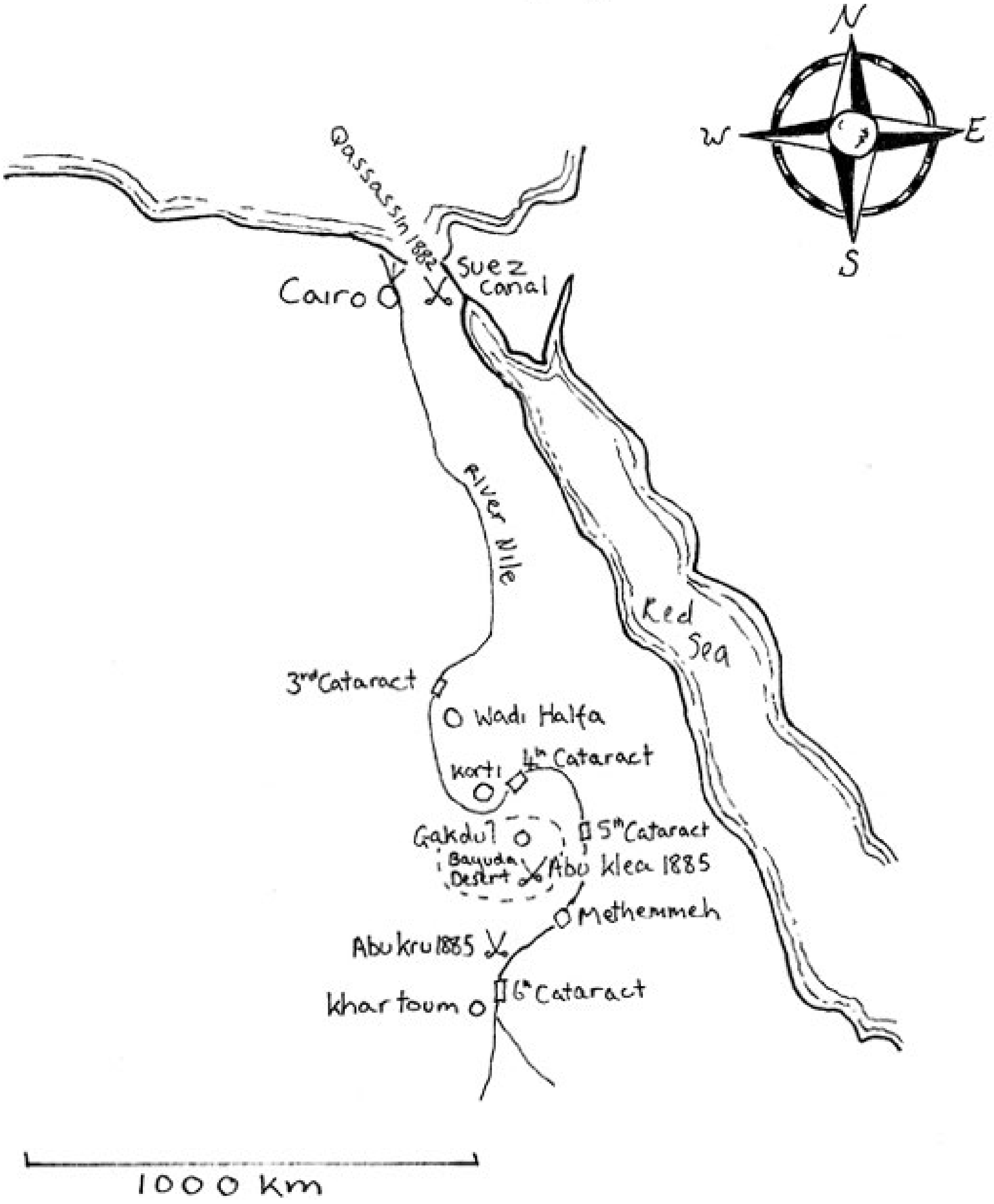
The Camel Corps had four camel regiments within it: one – the Heavy Camel Regiment – was formed of volunteers drawn principally from heavy cavalry regiments; the Greys contributed two officers, two sergeants, two corporals, a trumpeter/bugler and thirty-eight men. Other contingents of similar size were drawn from the Household Cavalry, the 2nd, 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards, the 1st Dragoons and the 5th and 16th Lancers. The Greys contingent was commanded by Captain William Hippisley, who had been attached to the 1st (The King's) Dragoon Guards during the Zulu War of 1879; he was to command the Greys 1900–02. The Greys formed part of No. 4 Company of the Heavy Camel Regiment together with the 1st (Royal) Dragoons. Major Wilfred Gough of the Royals commanded the company and the other Greys' officer was Lieutenant Richard Wolfe.

The route to Abu Klea was a sandy one and began at Korti, downstream from the fourth cataract of the Nile. Beyond Korti the river swells eastward in a 400-mile bulge; it was decided that the Camel Corps and its accompanying units should disembark at Korti and proceed overland for the 176 miles south to Methemmeh, 96 miles north of Khartoum, where a rendezvous would be effected with the River Column. In the afternoon of 30 December 1884 the Desert Column set off. Gakdul, the halfway point, was reached less than three days later and the column replenished its water supplies from the wells there. By 14 January 1885 the column, 1,800 strong, had received sufficient supplies to enable it to proceed towards the next wells, at Abu Klea, 43 miles to the south.

Richard Wolfe as a lieutenant, 2nd Dragoons, c. 1881. Having joined 3rd Dragoon Guards from Sandhurst in January 1878, Wolfe transferred to the Scots Greys two weeks later and was promoted lieutenant in 1879. He was killed at Abu Klea on 17 January 1885.

On 16 January, Major John French, 19th Hussars, reconnoitring ahead, came upon a body of the enemy, Sudanese tribesmen, which, as he and his scouts approached, was revealed to be an army massed to defend and prevent access to the wells. Accordingly, since night was falling, the column retired into a hastily constructed zariba (a thornbush-ringed encampment) and, under sporadic enemy fire, settled down to wait for dawn. As the sun came up on 17 January, the firing increased and it became apparent that the Sudanese were preparing to attack. The column formed a massive square and advanced towards Abu Klea, leaving the majority of the camels, stores and a protecting guard of 100 men inside the zariba.

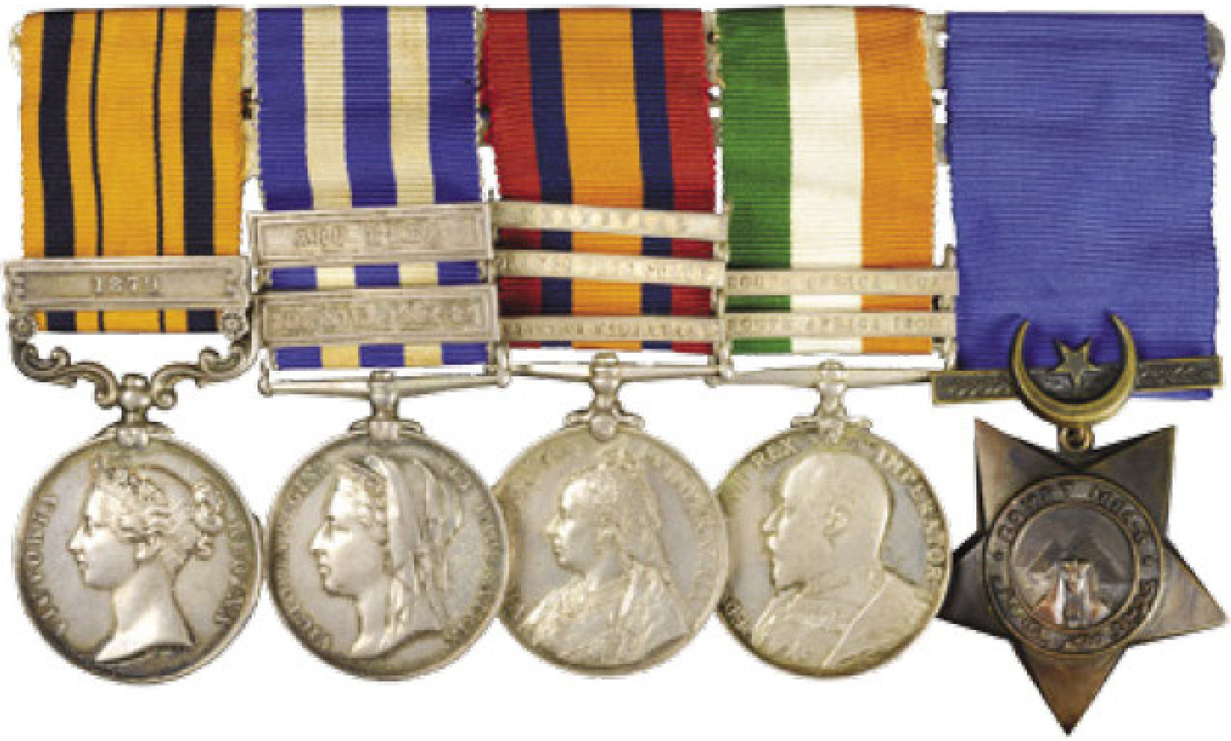
The Sudan Campaign 1885


N
W
E
S
Qassassin 1882
Suez Canal
Cairo
River Nile
Red Sea
3rd Cataract
Wadi Halfa
Korti
4th Cataract
Gakdul
5th Cataract
Bayuda Desert
Abu Klea 1885
Methemmeh
Abukru 1885
6th Cataract
Khartoum
1000 Km

The Heavy Camel Regiment, of about 370 men, formed the rear side and the rear half of the left side of the square; the Naval Brigade with its Gardner gun – an American .45-inch calibre five-barrelled machine gun adopted by the Royal Navy in 1880–81 – was initially deployed inside the square at the midpoint of its rear side. No. 5 Company (5th and 16th Lancers) was stationed on the extreme right of the resultant regimental L-shape, with No.

4 Company (Royals and Greys) on its left, No. 4 Company having on its left No. 3 Company (4th and 5th Dragoon Guards). In the centre of the square were the remaining camels and the Corps staff and supporting elements.

As it moved ponderously forward, the square presented a large and slow-moving target for the enemy riflemen and many casualties resulted as the square gradually became an oblong, stretched by the inability of the camels in the centre to keep pace or formation. As the wounded began to increase in number and were loaded onto the camels, the rear side of the square bulged and became ragged and, as the enemy's fire increased from the square's left, the sides of the formation became distorted. After progress for some distance in this fashion, and as the Sudanese appeared to be about to assault it, the square halted – on slightly rising ground that positioned the front and right of the square above the remainder. This halt was intended to allow the rear of the square to re-form in order that it could prepare to receive the tribesmen's attack. At that point the Sudanese charged the left side of the square, in densely packed, sprinting columns that were decimated by volley fire from the infantry and shrapnel shells fired from the Royal Artillery contingent's three 7-pounder screw guns. The weight of British fire caused the Sudanese to veer to their right, where they were reinforced by a fresh wave of tribesmen, all of whom fell upon the square's rear side and left rear corner (the position held by the Greys), which had no time to close up from its former open-order state. At that point, Captain Lord Charles Beresford RN, commanding the Naval Brigade, ordered the Gardner gun to be wheeled out of the square and turned on the advancing tribesmen. The Gardner jammed after seventy rounds and all its crew, except Beresford and a naval rating, were overwhelmed and killed by the Sudanese who rushed the gap in the square. In less time than it takes to read about it, the Sudanese were inside the broken square and being reinforced each second by fresh waves of tribesmen. Fortunately for the survival of the square, the barrier presented by the mass of camels in its centre prevented total chaos from ensuing. The rear rank of the soldiers in the opposite – and raised – corner to the broken corner of the square, the Guards & Marines Camel Regiment, drawn from the Grenadier, Coldstream and Scots Guards and the Royal Marines Light Infantry, were ordered to face about and fire volleys from their .45 inch calibre single-shot Martini-Henry rifles into the contained mass of tribesmen. At the close range involved, this resulted in wholesale slaughter; inevitably, it also resulted in some casualties among the British from what would now be called ‘friendly fire’. Eventually, firepower and discipline told and those few Sudanese left alive inside the square, together with those left unwounded outside it, retreated. The entire battle is thought to have taken ten minutes. Sudanese dead were estimated at between 800 and 1,100; British casualties were computed at eighty-six killed and eighty-one wounded. No. 4 Company of the Heavy Camel Regiment, which bore the brunt of the attack, suffered most casualties – the Greys losing Lieutenant Richard Wolfe, Corporal Shiels (or Sheals) and nine men killed in action and five men wounded, some of whom subsequently died, including Hippisley’s soldier-servant, Private Findlater.

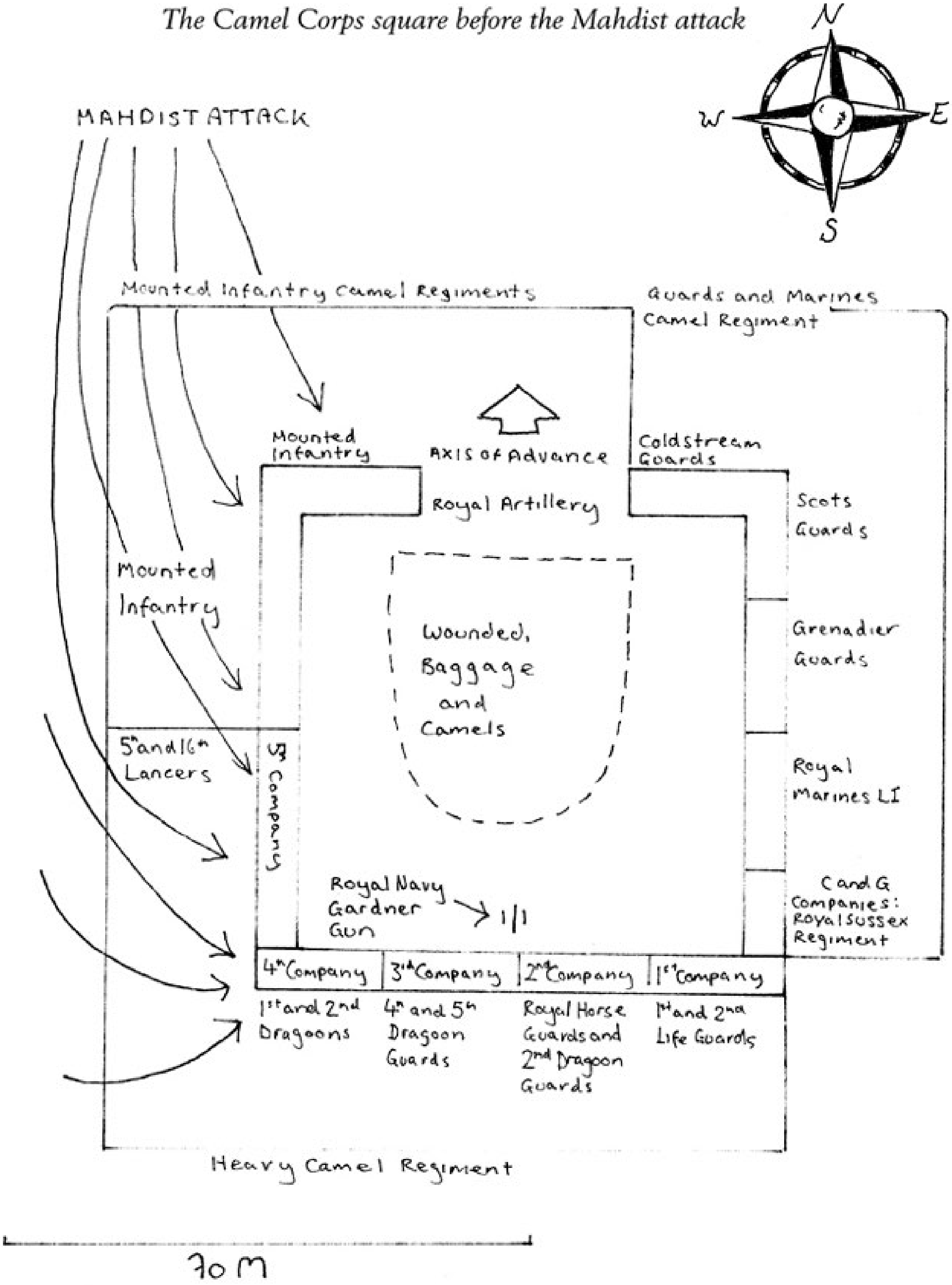


The medals of William Henry Hippisley (1855–1908), who joined the Scots Greys in 1876, served with 1st King’s Dragoon Guards in the Zulu War 1879, commanded the Greys’ contingent of the Heavy Camel Regiment in the Sudan in 1885 and was a member of the party that went to St Petersburg in 1894 to welcome the Tsar as the regiment’s first Colonel-in-Chief. The medals are the South Africa Medal 1879, the

Egyptian Campaigns Medal 1884–85, the Queen’s and King’s South Africa medals 1899–1902 and the Khedive’s Egyptian Star 1884–86.

Abu Klea, 17 January 1885

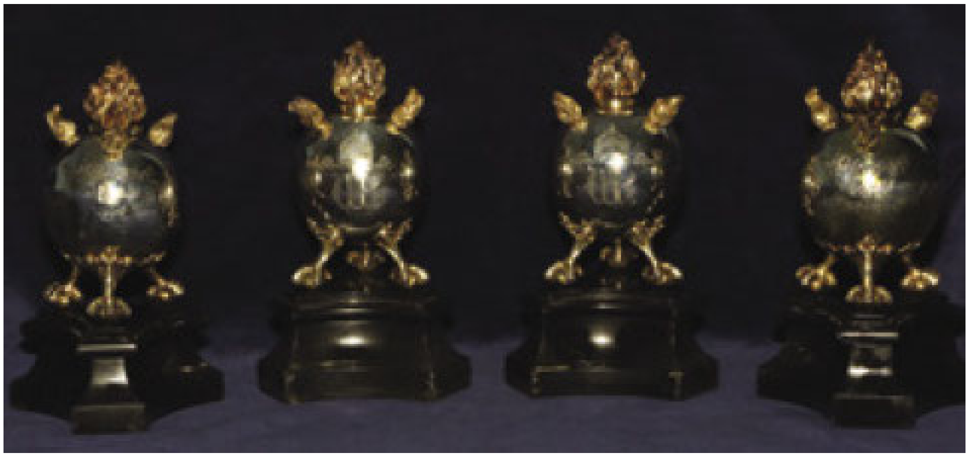
The Camel Corps square before the Mahdist attack


N
W
E
S
MAHDIST ATTACK
Mounted Infantry Camel Regiments
Guards and Marines Camel Regiment
Mounted Infantry
AXIS OF Advance
Coldstream Guards
Royal Artillery
Scots Guards
Mounted Infantry
Wounded, Baggage and Camels
Grenadier Guards
5th and 16th Lancers
5th Company
Royal Marines LI
Royal Navy Gardner Gun
C and G Companies: Royal Sussex Regiment
4th Company
3rd Company
2nd Company
1st Company
1st and 2nd Dragoons
4th and 5th Dragoon Guards
Royal Horse Guards and 2nd Dragoon Guards
1st and 2nd Life Guards
Heavy Camel Regiment
70 M

A diagram of the formation and composition of the Camel Corps' 'square' at Abu Klea on 17 January 1885. The position of No. 4 Company (Royals and Greys), Heavy Camel Regiment, can be seen at the bottom left corner.

A table centrepiece mounted in silver, depicting a sergeant of the Royal Scots Greys and another of the Gordon Highlanders and inscribed, ‘Presented by the Sergeants 2nd Gordon Highlanders – 92nd – to the Sergeants Royal Scots Greys 1891’.

At the end of the action, as light was fading and since Brigadier Stewart was anxious to gain the wells at Abu Klea before nightfall, the column moved on, necessarily leaving some wounded behind, together with the camels and their guard in the zariba. Once Abu Klea was reached, an officer and twenty-five men from each company were detailed to return to collect the wounded and the camels from the zariba and this operation occupied most of the night; Hippisley was the Greys’ officer thus detailed from No. 4 Company. Among those brought in by Hippisley’s party was Sergeant ‘Johnnie’ Anderson, who had been badly wounded before the battle of Abu Klea; in commemoration of his part in the campaign and his survival of it, Anderson presented a pair of silver-plated camels and their riders – representing soldiers of the Camel Corps – to the Greys’ Sergeants’ Mess in May 1885. An action similar to that at Abu Klea was fought at Abu Kru, near Methemmeh, on 19 January but the square remained intact and the tribesmen were kept at a distance, despite inflicting many casualties by their rifle fire; one of those seriously wounded was Brigadier Stewart, who died from his wounds shortly after receiving news of his promotion to major general. Lieutenant William Middleton of the Greys came out from Britain to replace Lieutenant Wolfe and Hippisley was appointed Adjutant of the Heavy Camel Regiment to replace Captain Lord St Vincent, 16th Lancers, who had succumbed to wounds received at Abu Klea. By mid-March 1885, having reached Khartoum at the end of January 1885 to find that Gordon was dead, the expedition had returned to Korti and re-embarked.



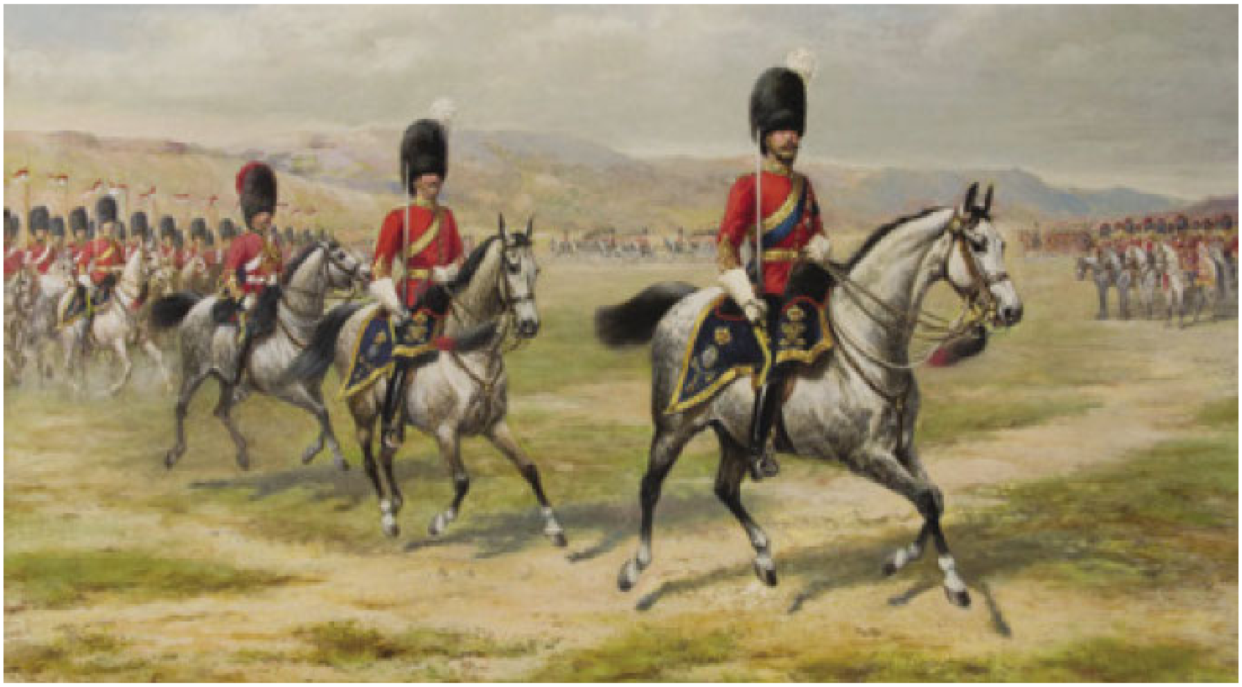
Four silver-gilt table lighters, for lighting cigars or cigarettes, presented to the Royal Scots Greys by Kaiser Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany, Aldershot 1894. The form of these lighters commemorates the use of the flaming grenade as a badge by the Greys. Each lighter contains a reservoir of methylated spirits in its interior and three individual torches on its outside.

While its small detachment of volunteers was experiencing desert warfare in the Sudan, the remainder of the regiment stayed in Edinburgh until marching south to Aldershot in 1886. While stationed at Aldershot in 1887, the regiment participated in the royal review of that year to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. After a spell in Brighton in 1888, the Greys returned to Ireland until 1894, when the regiment went back to Aldershot.

On 12 July 1894, Queen Victoria reviewed her troops in Aldershot accompanied by Nicholas, the son of Tsar Alexander III of Russia. The Tsarevich was much impressed by one of the cavalry regiments on parade: the Royal Scots Greys. A few months later, in November 1894, following the death of his father, Nicholas became Tsar, and on 26 November he married Alexandra Fedorovna, Queen Victoria's granddaughter. During the wedding celebrations, Queen Victoria appointed him Colonel-in-Chief of the Greys.

It was decided that a small deputation from the regiment should travel to St Petersburg to pay their respects to their new Colonel-in-Chief, and in January 1895 Lieutenant-Colonel Welby, the Commanding Officer – together with Major Hippisley, Captain Scobell and Regimental Sergeant-Major Duncan – set off from London by train. They took with them a painting commissioned from John Chester Mathews of the Tsar at the head of his regiment (an impressive, if fanciful, scene).

On Saturday 2 February, the party was received at the Anichkov Palace by the Tsar and Tsarina, the former wearing his uniform as Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Scots Greys, and the picture was duly presented. Major Hippisley, an inveterate diarist, recorded that 'The Colonel … asked him to accept the picture of the Regt from the officers of his Regt and the Emperor replied most graciously, saying he should value the gift most highly, that it was only last year he saw the regiment at Aldershot and had very much admired it and had been so struck with our horses.'



Tsar Nicholas as Colonel-in-Chief at the head of his regiment (1895); copy of the original oil painting by John Chester Mathews.

The painting, together with the Tsar's original uniform, is now in the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. Major Colin Mitchell-Rose commissioned a copy of the painting, which he presented to the regiment in December 2012.

Nicholas II invited Colonel Welby to his coronation in May 1896, and later that year when the Tsar visited the Queen at Balmoral he arrived wearing his Greys uniform escorted by a mounted detachment of the regiment.

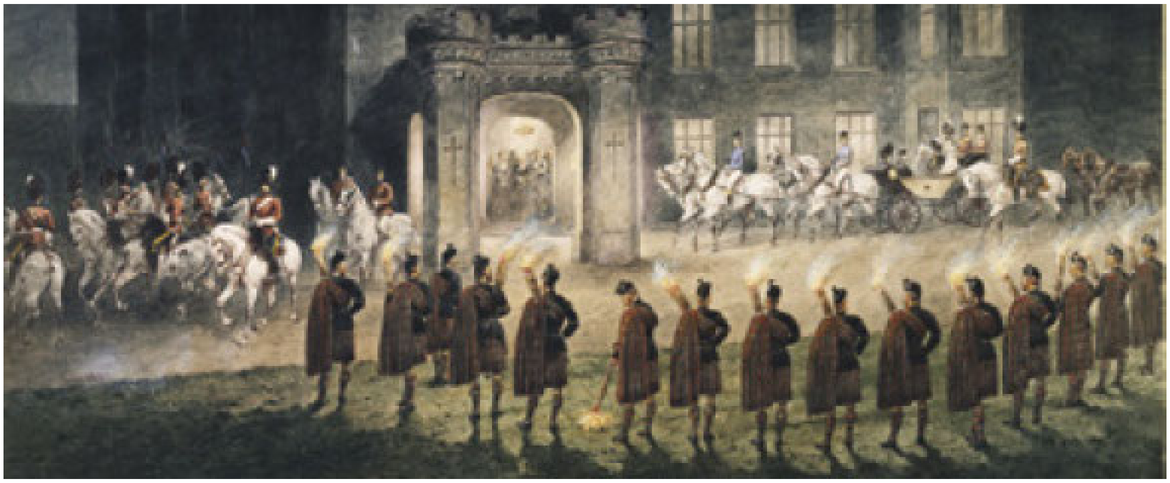
In 1902 Tsar Nicholas presented the regiment with a portrait of himself by Serov, wearing the uniform of Colonel-in-Chief. Valentin Serov (1865–1911) was one of the leading painters during Russia's 'Silver Age' and much in demand as a society portraitist both for the aristocracy and for the new moneyed classes. His portraits not only caught the elegance and sumptuous beauty of the age, but also managed to convey

a relaxed informality in his subjects. This portrait was to be a more formal composition, but even with the more rigid pose is not stiff and the character of the Tsar is clear.

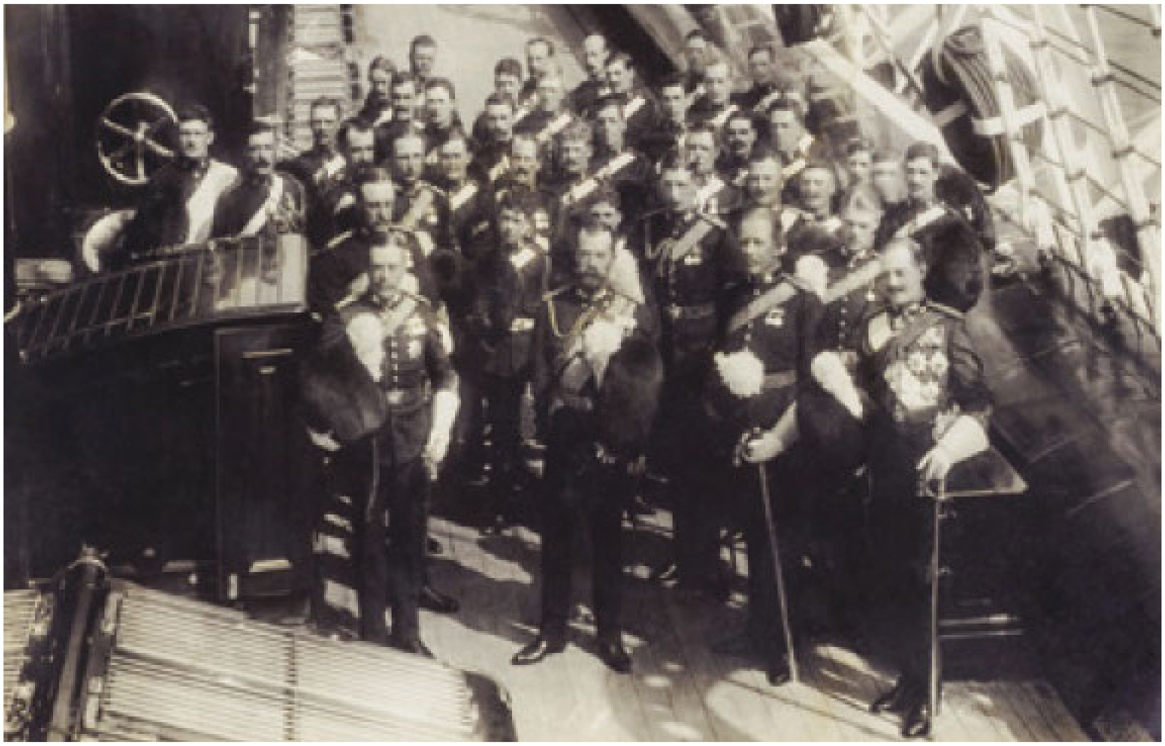
Serov was, however, soon to break off his links with the Romanovs and curtly announced that he 'no longer works in that house'. Whether this was over lack of payment for the portraits or a supposed slight by the Tsarina is unclear: she allegedly criticised one of his portraits for being 'unfinished', at which Serov handed her his brushes, asking if she could do better.

The Tsar is recorded as wearing his British uniform on several other occasions, including on a visit he made to Cowes in 1909 where he was photographed with a group of Scots Greys on the deck of the Standart.

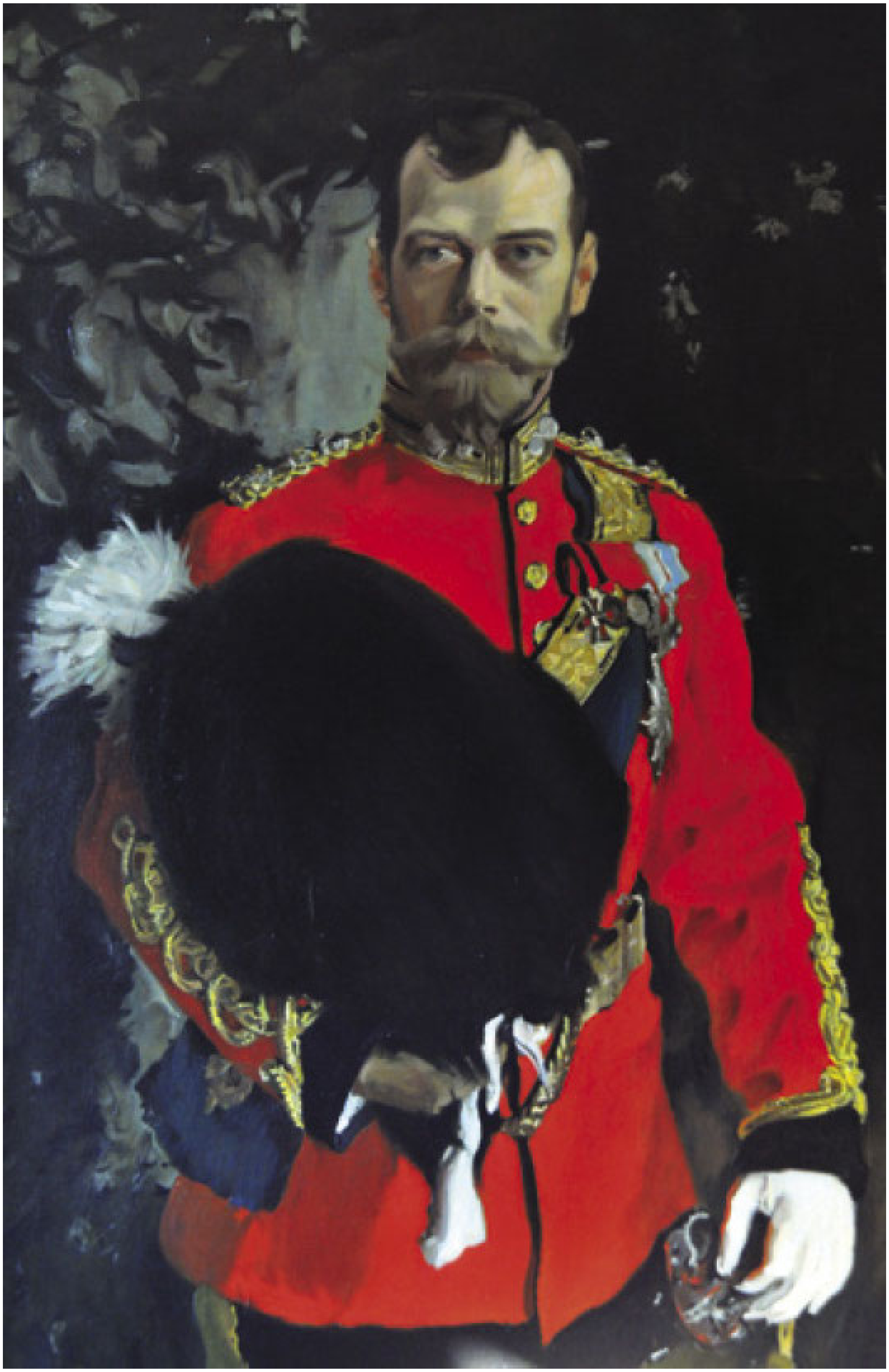
Bruce Ridge



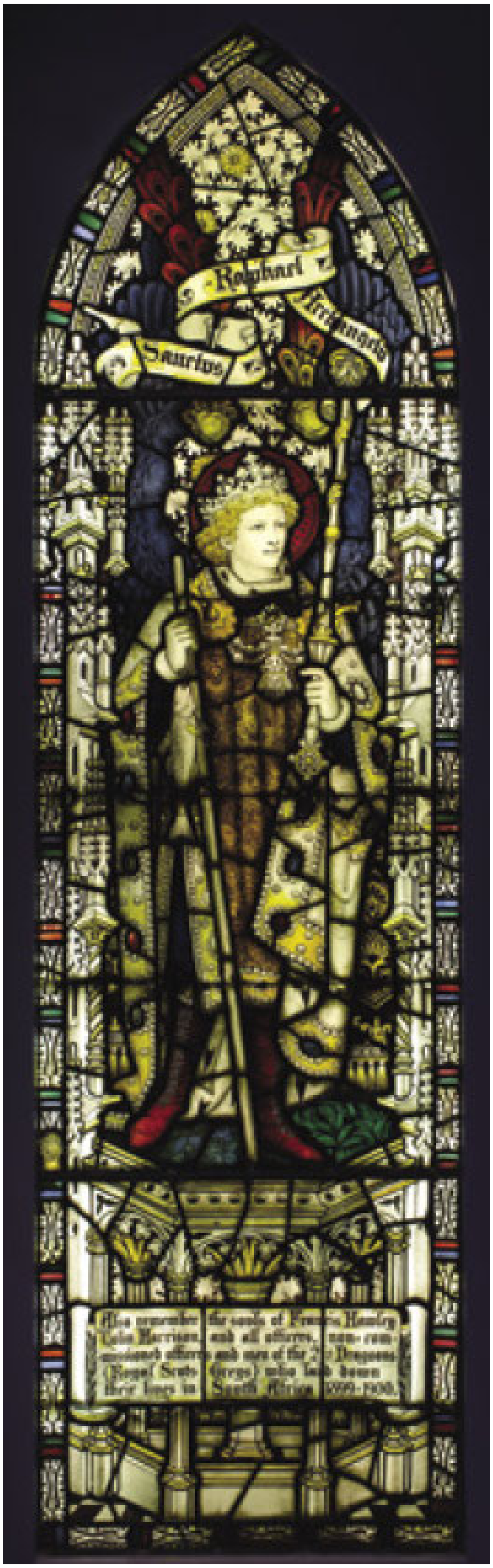
Arrival of Tsar Nicholas II and the Tsarina at Balmoral, 22 September 1896; watercolour by Orlando Norie. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014)



The Colonel-in-Chief with a group of Scots Greys on the royal yacht Standart at Cowes, 1909. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Douglas Miller DSO is at front left, HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught at the right.



His Imperial Majesty Tsar Nicholas II; copy of the original oil painting by Valentin Serov (1865–1911), 1902.


Sanctus
S · Raphael
Archangelus
Also remember the souls of Francis Hamley
Colin Harrison, and all officers, non-com-
missioned officers and men of the 2nd Dragoons
(Royal Scots Greys) who laid down
their lives in South Africa 1899-1900.

Stained-glass window installed in the garrison church, Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow, following the South African War 1899–1902 and commemorating the sacrifices of Major Francis Henry Toovey Hawley, who died at Bloemfontein in April 1900, and Lieutenant John Collinson ('Colin') Harrison, who died at Pretoria in September 1900, as well as other soldiers of the Royal Scots Greys who gave their lives in the first year of that war. The work of Charles E. Kemp, the window was removed from the church during its demolition in 2004.

From 1894 to 1897 the regiment remained in southern England, at Hounslow and Aldershot but spent 1898 and the greater part of 1899 in Edinburgh. The regiment was ordered to mobilise for service in South Africa on 7 September 1899 and reported that mobilisation was complete on 17 October. The Headquarters and B Squadron embarked first, on 5 November from Glasgow. A and C Squadrons had to exchange their horses for others owing to an outbreak of the equine ailment 'pink-eye' but C Squadron left Edinburgh on 16 November, took over healthy horses in Aldershot and sailed from Southampton. The Greys' A Squadron left Edinburgh on 17 November and took over a squadron of horses from the 17th Lancers; all the squadrons were united near Cape Town on 8 December. One result of this requisitioning of horses from other regiments was that, as the regimental historian Colonel Michael Blacklock has said, 'there were not many greys in the horse lines'. It is also recorded that for the first time in the regiment's history those remaining greys were dyed in order not only to disguise any remaining regimental identity but also to camouflage them against the dust colour of the veldt on which they would be operating.

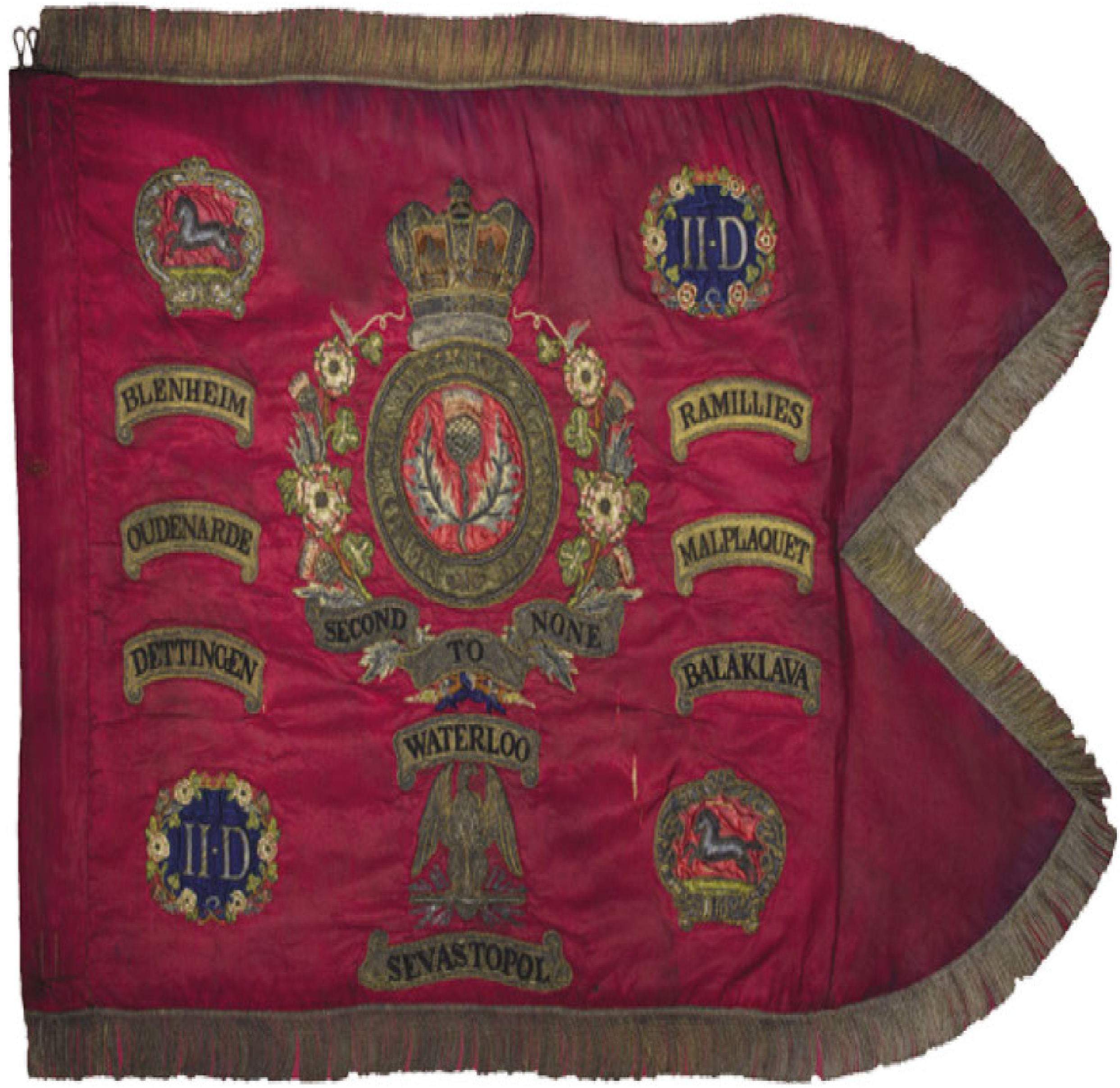
For the first two months of its time in South Africa, the regiment operated by squadrons, principally based on and around the Orange River station in the north of Cape Colony. When the Cavalry Division was organised in February 1900, the Greys formed part of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, with the Carabiniers and 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons. The regiment's experiences between February 1900 and the capture of Pretoria on 5 June were broadly similar to those of the Carabiniers, noted above. The Greys took part in the cavalry charge at Klip Drift, losing two soldiers – Privates Sutherland and McGinn – wounded, and participated at the siege and battle of Paardeberg. A short action was fought at Dronfield on 16 February, when three other ranks were killed and seven of all ranks wounded, Second Lieutenant The Honourable William McClintock-Bunbury subsequently dying from his wounds. The front rank of the Greys relinquished its lances on 6 March, before the action at Poplar Grove, and sustained two wounded other ranks – Sergeant Trumpeter Inkster and Private Harris – at Driefontein on 10 March.

A private soldier of the Greys serving as a mounted orderly in South Africa, December 1902. The regimental 'saltire' badge, in yellow cloth, is attached to the side of his tropical helmet.

Major Henry Scobell and C Squadron charged a Boer position west of Bloemfontein on 12 March 1900. Four months later, owing to bad communications, Scobell and his command of three companies of the

Suffolk Regiment, together with C Squadron of the Greys, were forced to surrender at Zilikat's Nek, west of Pretoria. Scobell escaped the same evening and walked back to Pretoria. Scobell's distinguished and very active service during the war brought him the brevet promotions of lieutenant-colonel in November 1900 and colonel in September 1901 – by which time he was commanding a fast-moving column of over a thousand men.

At the end of January 1901 the 1st Cavalry Brigade was disbanded and, coincidentally but propitiously, the regiment's carbines were replaced by Lee-Enfield magazine rifles. The regiment needed the extra range that the rifle provided over the carbine for the type of anti-guerrilla warfare in which it was about to become involved. Occupied in the eastern Transvaal, as part of an eight-column force commanded by Major General Sir John French KCB, the Greys marched back and forth, escorting convoys, and carrying out skirmishing operations. In March 1901, C Squadron was linked to a squadron of the Carabiniers for two small raids which netted guns and ammunition from the Boers. In April 1901, the Greys column was placed under the command of Colonel Edmund Allenby and so was closely involved with the Carabiniers in the remaining months of the war, as part of Allenby's encircling movement against the remaining Boer forces. By the end of the war the regiment had lost seven officers and sixty-seven men killed or died, and four officers and eighty-two men wounded. The Greys remained in South Africa until 1904.


II·D
BLENHEIM
RAMILLIES
OUDENARDE
MALPLAQUET
DETTINGEN
BALAKLAVA
SECOND
TO
NONE
WATERLOO
II·D
SEVASTOPOL

The guidon of the Royal Scots Greys carried from the mid-1880s until the early 20th century. The battle honours for Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet and Dettingen were awarded in 1882 and no further honours were awarded until 1905.

In August 1902, Brevet Colonel Henry Scobell was promoted substantive lieutenant-colonel to command the Greys in succession to William

Hippisley. Scobell was promoted brigadier-general in April 1903 to command the 1st Cavalry Brigade in Aldershot and then advanced to major general six months later; he was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in 1904 and Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) in 1911.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER SIX

A detachment of the Royal Scots Greys on the Hindenburg Line, late 1918.

3RD DRAGOON GUARDS

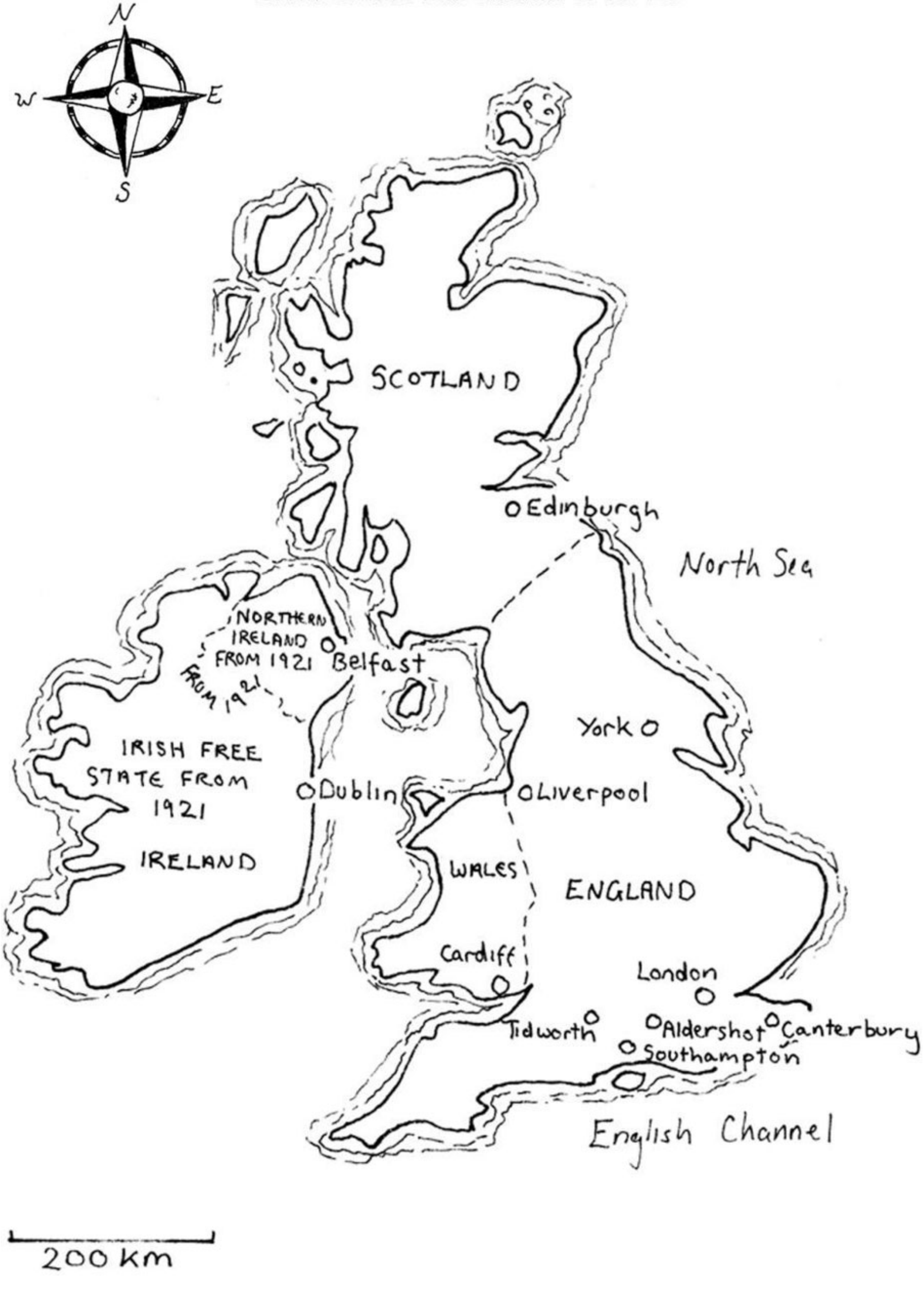
In 1903 Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Garratt, who had served in the Carabiniers 1878–1900, was appointed to command the 3rd for a year, after which he returned to the Carabiniers as its Commanding Officer. Garratt had made a name for himself during the South African War as a leader of irregular cavalry units and had been awarded the DSO and

appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in recognition of that service; knighted in 1918, he retired as a brigadier-general and died in 1928.

The regiment remained in South Africa until 1904, when it moved to Ireland. Nothing of note is recorded as having happened to the regiment in Ireland during the four years of its tour of duty there and it was posted back to England for a further four years in 1908 before handing over its horses to the Carabiniers on that regiment's return home and moving to Egypt in 1912. In 1910 the regiment had managed to match its horses' colours by troop: blacks, bays and chestnuts, with greys probably being retained for the band and for the trumpeters. Although many changes in the art of war and training were achieved during the years between the ending of the South African War and the beginning of the First World War, the importance of keeping up appearances was characteristic of the British cavalry's attitude to soldiering in the decade prior to the First World War.

Professionalism was on the increase in the army during the first decade of the 20th century and some of the easier lessons of the South African War were learnt. Unfortunately, few in authority contemplated that the next war might be larger in scale than the South African War, might not be fought in terrain where the cavalry could be given full rein or might be against a rather better-organised army than that which the Boers had been able to field. Most of those who identified Germany as the likely enemy and Europe as the next likely theatre of operations were either unaware of the likelihood of stalemate under contemporary battlefield conditions or too junior to have their views heeded. While army reforms were wide-ranging and resulted in the British army that went to France in 1914 being, without doubt, the best fed, led and organised army that Britain had ever sent overseas, the nature of the campaign over the next four years was largely unforeseen. This is not altogether surprising, even if one considers empirical knowledge as the only valid kind, since no British soldier then in a position of influence had experienced a cavalry action in northern Europe. Eminent cavalry soldiers in the army, such as John French and Douglas Haig, had campaigned in Egypt, the Sudan, India and South Africa. There, the terrain was open and the opposition – although numerous – was poorly organised, inadequately armed and generally devoid of machine guns. Kitchener, who as a young Woolwich cadet had seen the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 at close quarters, had failed to appreciate the effect of the machine gun against cavalry because it was rarely used in that conflict as other than a piece of artillery in the ‘indirect fire’ role. The effectiveness of the Boers’ few machine guns had been negated both by the speed of the cavalry and by the fact that these weapons were rudimentary compared to those that would be deployed in such large numbers by the German Army of 1914–18.

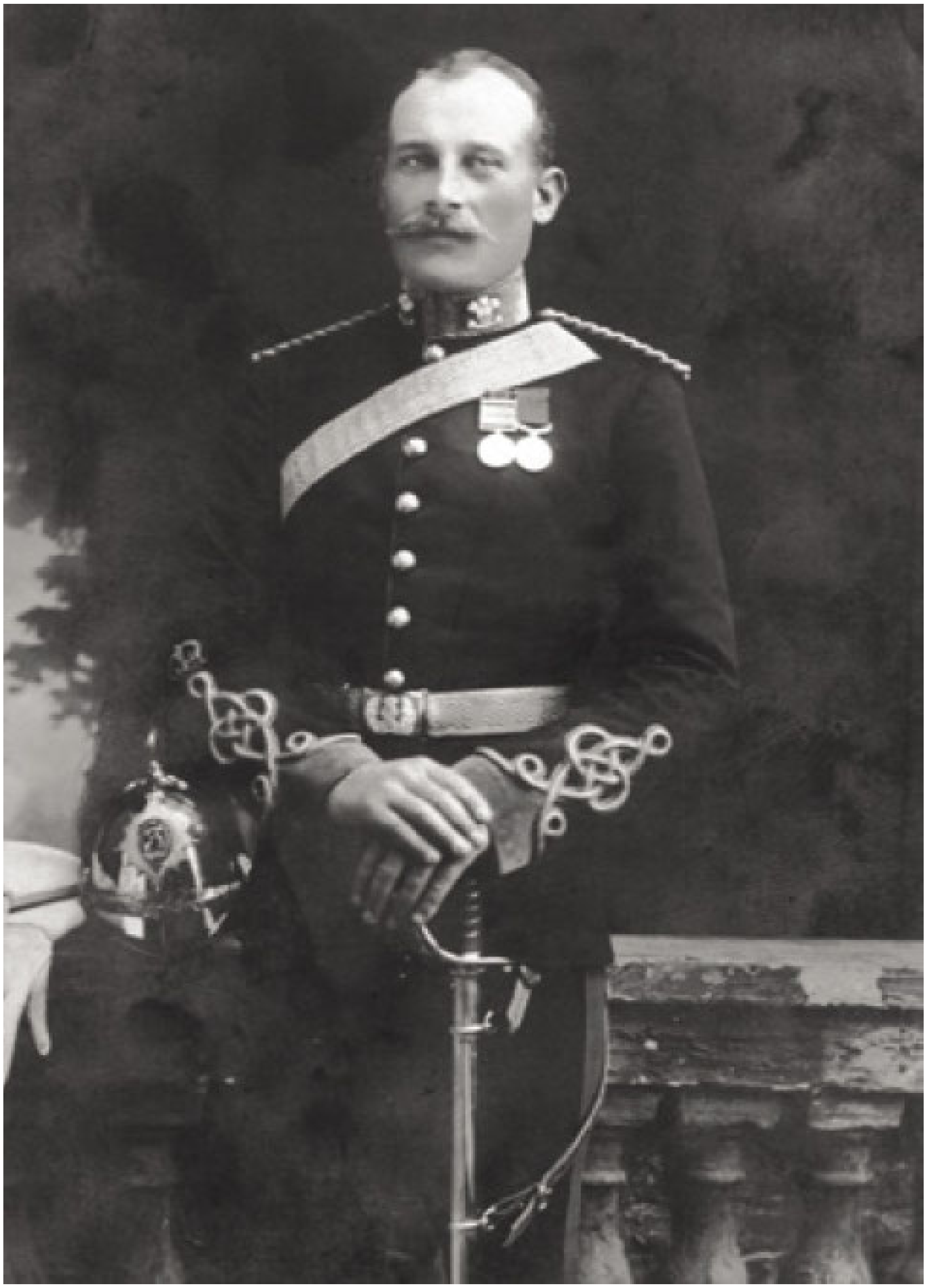
Great Britain and Ireland 1903–21


N
W
E
S
SCOTLAND
O Edinburgh
North Sea
NORTHERN IRELAND FROM 1921
FROM 1921
O Belfast
York O
IRISH FREE STATE FROM 1921
O Dublin
O Liverpool
IRELAND
WALES
ENGLAND
Cardiff
London
Tidworth
Aldershot
Canterbury
Southampton
English Channel
200 km

Few soldiers writing at the time, or in positions of senior command, seem to have considered for a moment an alternative view to the one loudly and frequently proclaimed: that the traditional role of the cavalry would play a considerable and significant part in the war to come. Lords Roberts and Kitchener were both from backgrounds – in the Artillery and the Engineers respectively – unlikely to have equipped either with a high regard for the cavalry spirit; they saw a little way through the pro-cavalry arguments but not far enough. Roberts was instrumental in abolishing the lance in 1903, except for ceremonial occasions, but he was largely ignored by the regiments and it was reinstated in 1909. All were agreed, however, that the cavalry's marksmanship needed improvement and this was slowly attended to, aided by the issue from 1903 of the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield rifle to all cavalry regiments; no longer would the mounted arm have to tolerate the limited range of the carbine. In 1908 the question of 'cut' or 'thrust' for the sword was finally decided and a new pattern sword issued which – with its long, slender, rigid blade – was good only for the thrust, such as would be used during an in-line cavalry charge. Its embellished version is the pattern still carried by most cavalry officers, for whom it was introduced in 1912. While it is without doubt one of the finest cavalry swords ever designed, some irony must attend the fact that it was introduced at a time when the use of the sword in action was decreasing and would shortly vanish.

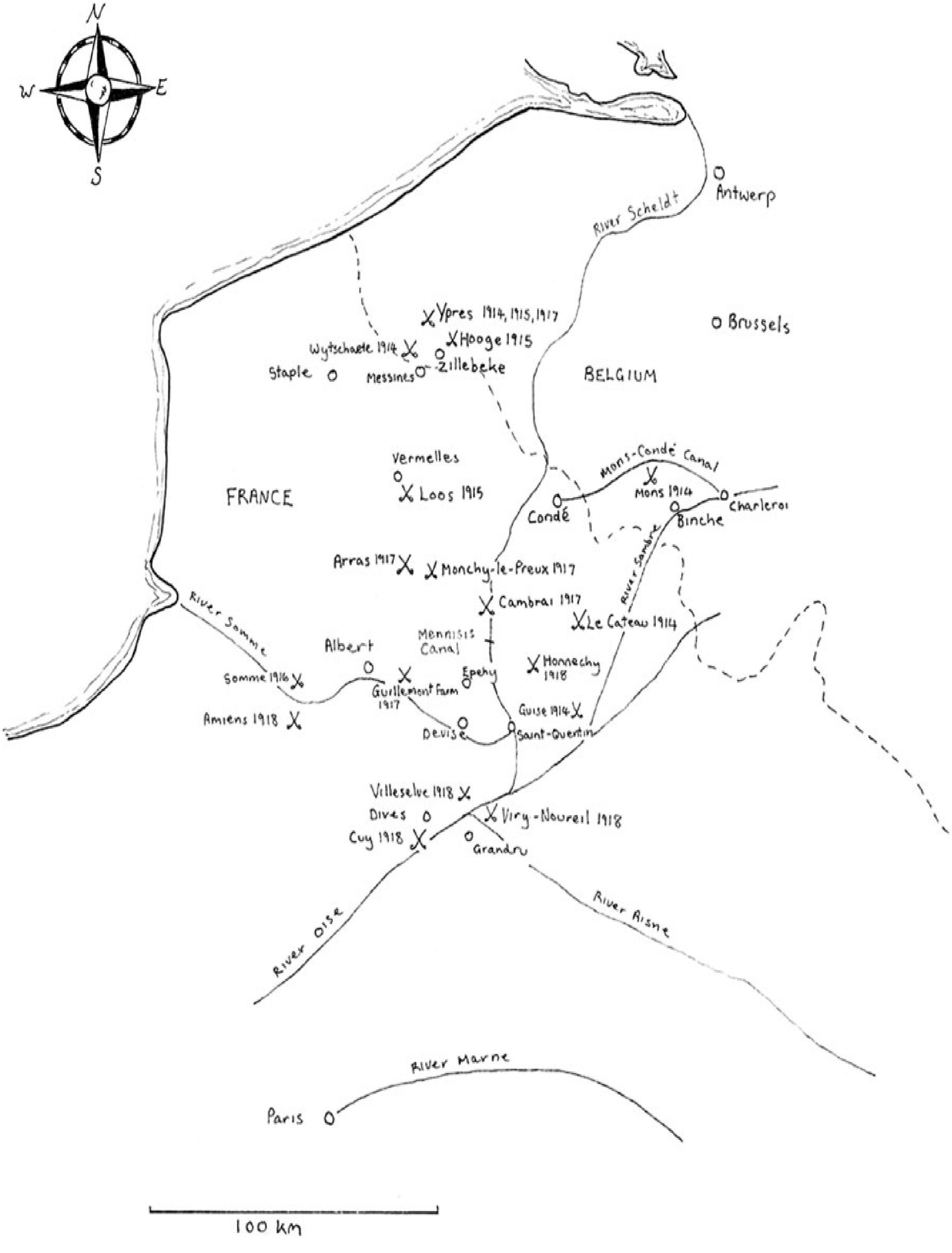
The causes of the First World War had, like those of the Indian Mutiny – which had also involved the Carabiniers – evolved over several decades by the time that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, son of the Emperor of Austria, was shot dead by a Serbian terrorist in Sarajevo in July 1914. By 1871 Germany had finally established itself as the strongest continental power in Europe, having brushed Denmark aside in 1863, humiliated Austrian and Bavarian forces in 1866 and trounced those of France in 1870–71. However, strength in mainland Europe counted for little without domination of the seas, as Napoleon had eventually discovered, and Germany's warship-building programme of the 1890s and 1900s finally awoke Britain to the threat posed by her increasingly assertive neighbour. In the late 19th century and in what generations of schoolchildren once knew as the 'Scramble for Africa' the European powers competed with indelicate haste for a slice of that continent; Germany – which started late – acquired less than the others.

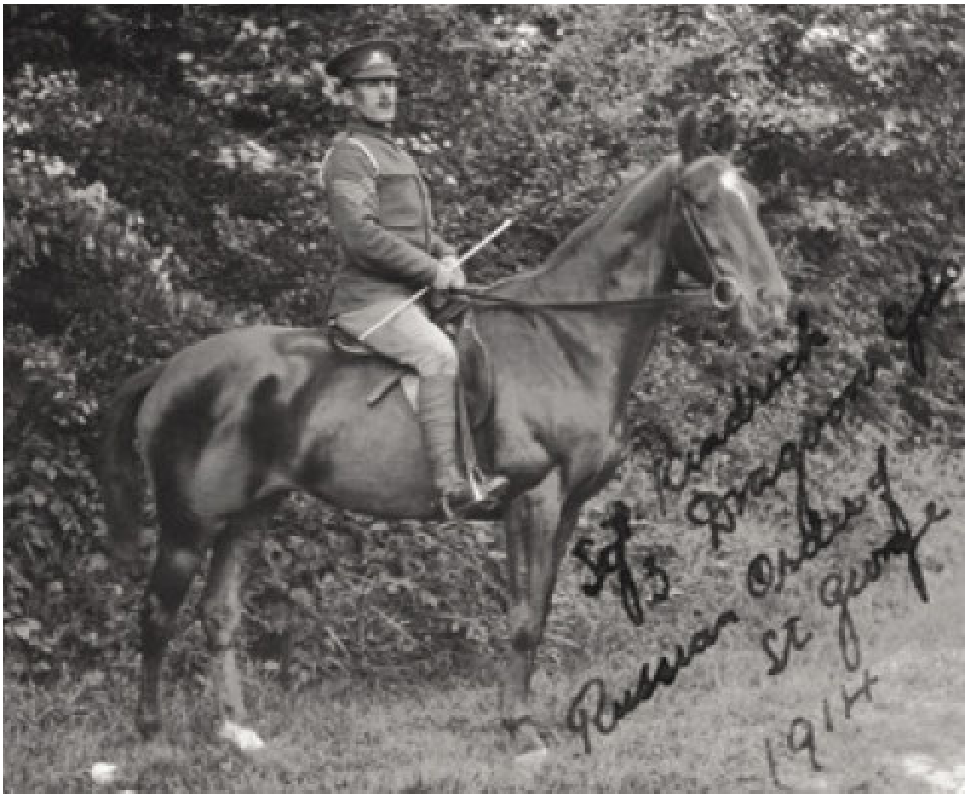
Tacit German support for the Boers during the South African War of 1899–1902 had irritated Britain. Despite the German Kaiser’s supposed respect for so many British institutions – like his cousin the Tsar, Wilhelm II was Colonel-in-Chief of an elite British regiment of dragoons, the 1st (Royal) Dragoons, from 1894 – it gradually became clear that Britain would have to fight Germany. The situation was not helped by France’s anti-German paranoia or, indeed, by that of Russia, which felt threatened by a powerful neighbour to her west; Britain had been linked by alliances to these two prickly powers for several years by 1914. In 1914 – once Russia had declared war on Austria in support of Serbia – France and Germany rushed to their respective allies’ aid and, when an Anglo-Belgian treaty of 1839 was violated by the German invasion of Belgium, Britain was compelled to intervene.



Mungo Stewart, the Regimental Sergeant-Major, 3rd Dragoon Guards, in Full Dress uniform c. 1913. Born in 1875, Mr Stewart was killed in action on 17 November 1914, early in the regiment's participation in the first battle of Ypres.

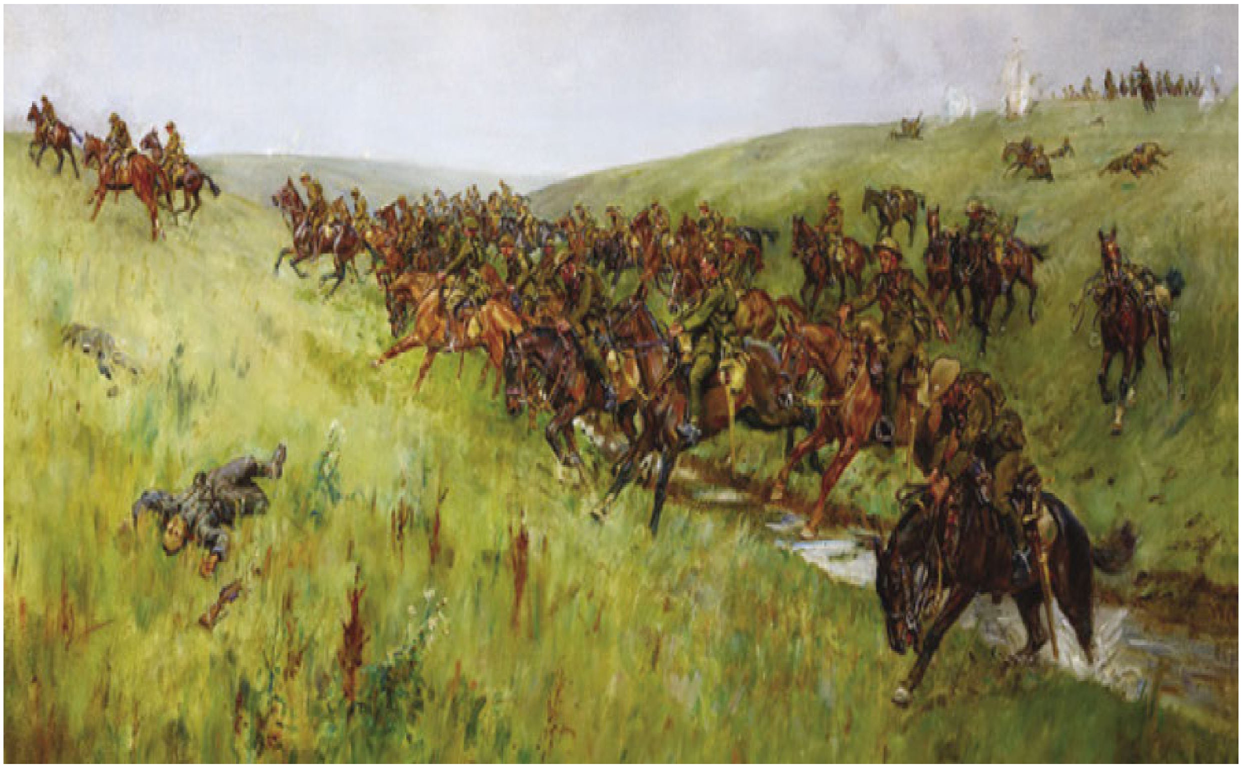
North-eastern France and Flanders 1914–18


N
W
E
S
Antwerp
River Scheldt
Ypres 1914, 1915, 1917
Brussels
Hooge 1915
Wytschaete 1914
Staple
Messines
Zillebeke
BELGIUM
Vermelles
Mons-Condé Canal
FRANCE
Loos 1915
Condé
Mons 1914
Charleroi
Binche
Arras 1917
Monchy-le-Preux 1917
River Sambre
River Somme
Cambrai 1917
Le Cateau 1914
Mennisis Canal
Albert
Honnechy 1918
Somme 1916
Epehy
Gurllemont Farm 1917
Guise 1914
Amiens 1918
Devise
Saint-Quentin
Villeselve 1918
Dives
Viry-Noureil 1918
Cuy 1918
Grandru
River Oise
River Aisne
River Marne
Paris
100 km



Sergeant Andrew Kendrick, 3rd Dragoon Guards, in 1914. In The London Gazette, 24 August 1915, it was announced that Sergeant Kendrick had been awarded the medal, 2nd class, of the Russian Order of St George 'for gallantry and distinguished service in the field'.

The 3rd Dragoon Guards were still in Egypt when war broke out in August 1914; the regiment was quartered on the outskirts of Cairo. Egypt, flanking the Suez Canal, was regarded as a vital possession guarding the route to India and, while Turkey's intentions remained unknown in the early months of the war, it had to be defended against possible Turkish incursion from its territories to the north and east. While it awaited relief by yeomanry forces from home, the regiment remained guarding the canal until the end of September 1914, at which point it embarked for England, arriving in Liverpool in mid-October.



The charge of 3rd Dragoon Guards at Honnechy, 9 October 1918 (detail); presented to the regiment by Major H. P. Holt MC. Oil on canvas by Lionel Edwards.

Both world wars were to be notable for the extent to which regimental identities were rapidly submerged beneath the much larger identities of brigades, divisions and army corps. The 3rd was placed in the 6th Cavalry Division, being brigaded with 1st (Royal) Dragoons and 10th (Prince of Wales's Own) Hussars, both of which regiments preceded the 3rd to France and were involved in the first battle of Ypres in late October. The regiment eventually sailed for France on 31 October and was in the line, dismounted, by 5 November.

For the next fortnight the regiment held its part of the line against assault after assault of German troops attempting to break through to Ypres. Its positions, shallowly entrenched and rapidly becoming waterlogged, were repeatedly shelled and – the art of entrenching being in its infancy – many soldiers were killed by snipers as they attempted to move around. For their services in the trenches at the first battle of Ypres, four officers and four other ranks were mentioned in despatches. Captain Edwin Wright, who had led an attack on an enemy-held farmhouse that was acting as a strongpoint, who had shot dead four Germans with his pistol and who was himself killed shortly afterwards, was recommended – unsuccessfully – for the posthumous award of a Victoria Cross. On 20 November the regiment was relieved and spent much of the rest of the winter of 1914–15 in billets behind the lines, occasionally supplying working parties or hastily required reinforcements for the front.

Edgar Ralph Coles, photographed on being commissioned second lieutenant, 3rd Dragoon Guards, in 1910. Born in 1889, Coles was promoted lieutenant in 1911 and captain in 1914; he was killed in action on 12 May 1915 during a prolonged German assault on the regiment's trench position in the second battle of Ypres.

The 3rd returned to the trenches at Zillebeke in front of Ypres on 8 February 1915 and remained there until the 13th, being relieved by the Carabiniers. At the second battle of Ypres in April 1915 the Germans used poison gas for the first time and, as a result, penetrated far into the British positions. The 3rd was kept in reserve throughout the battle, constantly mounted and moving from position to position as the situation demanded and as the line weakened in various places. At the beginning of May 1915, after a ferocious German counter-attack, the 3rd was moved, dismounted, back into the line to relieve The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, one of the many infantry regiments which had borne the brunt of the fighting in the trenches. The trenches that the regiment occupied had been hastily dug, were hardly 2 feet deep, without sandbags and lacking communication trenches; in an overnight lull, the relieving forces busied themselves in reconstructing and reinforcing the defences. At dawn on 15 May the entire line was heavily shelled as a preamble to a massed infantry attack, part of which broke through on A Squadron's left and almost encircled it. The battle ebbed and flowed with advances and retreats over a few yards of ground to left and right but eventually the original positions were regained. Further fighting took place during the following few days until the regiment was relieved by the 20th Hussars on 20 May, thereafter returning to its billets behind the lines. Three days later, it was back in the Ypres Salient, defending the château at Hooge until 4 June; these were ten days in which it was subjected to fearsome bombardments and attacks by successive waves of German infantry. The 3rd's casualties were severe as a result of its participation in the second battle of Ypres but twenty-five awards were made that reflected the gallantry of officers and other ranks. These awards comprised a Companionship of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO), two Military Crosses (MCs), five Distinguished Conduct Medals (DCMs), five Military Medals (MMs), eleven mentions in despatches and one medal of the Russian Order of St George, 3rd class. Lieutenant E. H. Grimshaw received both a Military Cross and a mention in despatches and Lance-Corporal Robert George Grant was the recipient of the Russian medal.

A British bugle dated 1915 and engraved, 'The ceasefire for the 3rd Dragoon Guards was sounded on this bugle by Tptr. Rowe at Leuze on 11 November 1918'.

Until 20 August 1915 the regiment remained in billets behind the line, training, testing gas masks, perfecting machine-gun drill and playing polo. The 3rd reconnoitred positions behind the infantry, which had won the initial engagement at the battle of Loos, and with them were ordered forward, dismounted, first to occupy the deserted German trenches and then to occupy Loos itself. The regiment and its accompanying infantry occupied the village and entrenched itself rapidly while under constant shellfire. From its positions the regiment was able to support the advancing infantry and, the battle won, was withdrawn at the end of September.

After spending the winter of 1915–16 in billets behind the line, a dismounted troop of the 3rd was brought forward again in January 1916 to Vermelles, where it remained, occasionally seeing action, until 8 February, when it was withdrawn. Little of great consequence happened in the regiment in 1916 prior to the battle of the Somme, which began in July and which most cavalry regiments believed – or hoped at least – would lead to the break-out for which the cavalry waited during the entire course of the war. As is now well known, the butcher's bill for the Somme provided no such opportunity for the regiment, which was barely involved and remained largely away from any serious action until well into 1917.

In April 1917 the regiment was ordered to advance to Arras and did so mounted, only dismounting as it neared the front lines, near Monchy-le-Preux – a village which it was ordered to attack. The attack proceeded under bombardment and in appalling weather conditions, but eventually, after a series of counter-attacks against the regiment's B and C Squadrons, the 3rd gained and held its positions until relieved on the evening of 11 April 1917. Between May and June 1917, sections of trenches in the line at Épehy were occupied by the regiment but it was then relieved in time to participate in the Cavalry Corps horse show in July. At Cambrai in November the regiment contributed nine officers and 218 other ranks to a dismounted division that took over a section of the front line threatened by a German counter-attack following the earlier successes of the tanks.

The winter of 1917–18 was relatively quiet for the regiment and, like so many of its fellow regiments, it was taken by surprise by the strength of the German offensive of 1918 which erupted in March when the 3rd was in quarters in Devise. Although a measure of confusion resulted and the greater part of the British Army retired, the regiment went into action in its dismounted role once the retreat had ceased and defensible positions had been reached. On several occasions, the 3rd found itself all but surrounded by German forces which had advanced at some speed, one German attack on the village of Viry-Noureuil succeeding in capturing the Officers' Mess, although only after stiff resistance. The line having been secured, the dismounted soldiers rejoined their regiments and withdrew. While its comrades were fighting as efficiently as infantrymen, a mounted troop of the 3rd, commanded by Lieutenant Arthur Vincent, was involved in a cavalry charge against a force of German infantry occupying a pair of copses near the village of Villeselve. Vincent's troop charged the right-hand copse, across ploughed land and in the face of rifle and machine-gun fire which caused them to complete the charge in extended line; the position was carried, though at the cost of seventy-five casualties.

The Rough Riding Staff, 3rd Dragoon Guards, Sialkot, 1921. The officer – seated centrally – is Captain Arthur Vincent MC who served as Adjutant 1922–25; seated to his left is Squadron Sergeant-Major Riding Instructor D. Kerr DCM. The role of a cavalry regiment's rough riding staff was to break new horses, train recruits to ride and improve regimental horsemanship.

For the remainder of the war, the regiment was divided and united, mounted and dismounted, by troop and by squadron and formed part of the final offensive advance that eventually won back all the ground lost in March and

April 1918. In October 1918 a German position at Honnechy was seriously impeding the westward advance of the British and the 6th Cavalry Brigade was ordered to assault it. The 3rd formed the right of the advance and rode for 2 miles under constant enfilade machine-gun fire from German positions on its right, taking the village with minimal casualties. The charge at Honnechy ended the 3rd's contribution to the First World War, a campaign that had involved 1,816 officers and men of the regiment, 951 of whom became casualties – the highest number of casualties suffered by any regular cavalry regiment.

The drum horse, 3rd Dragoon Guards, at Sialkot, north-eastern India, 1921.

Throughout the early months of 1919 regimental demobilisation was a priority; it was completed on 7 March. Reduced to cadre strength of ninety-nine of all ranks, the regiment left Antwerp on 22 March, reached Southampton on 25 March and arrived at Assaye Barracks, Tidworth, the same evening. Later in the year the regiment was posted to India, being stationed at Sialkot. By 1922 it had been reduced to two squadrons in preparation for its amalgamation with the Carabiniers.

William Robertson (1860–1933) was the eldest son of Thomas Robertson, a villager of Welbourn in Lincolnshire. In 1877 he enlisted in the 16th Lancers. He reached the rank of troop sergeant-major in 1885, and applied for a commission. Two years later he joined the 3rd Dragoon Guards in India as a second lieutenant. Although his fellow officers treated him with civility, he found it difficult to manage in a very expensive regiment, and, to supplement his pay, began to study languages, for which he discovered an extraordinary aptitude.

His regimental duty ended in 1892 when he was posted to the Intelligence Department, specialising in the North-West Frontier and Russian activities in particular. In 1894 he was severely wounded and awarded the DSO in the Chitral Relief expedition.

Robertson was the first ranker officer to qualify for the Staff College, and by 1903 had caught up with most officers of his own age when he was promoted to colonel. Returning to the Staff College as Commandant, he showed ‘an uncanny knack of spotting at once the weak points of a plan’. As Director of Military Training in 1913, Robertson foresaw a German assault through Belgium, in exactly the

spot where the British Army was most likely to be deployed, and planned exercises to study the conduct of a long retreat. In 1915 he became Chief of General Staff at General Headquarters (GHQ). He is of course best remembered at this time for warning General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien of his impending dismissal by Field Marshal John French with the immortal words: ‘’Orace, you’re for ‘ome.’

Officer’s pouch, 3rd Dragoon Guards, worn by Lieutenant Robertson.

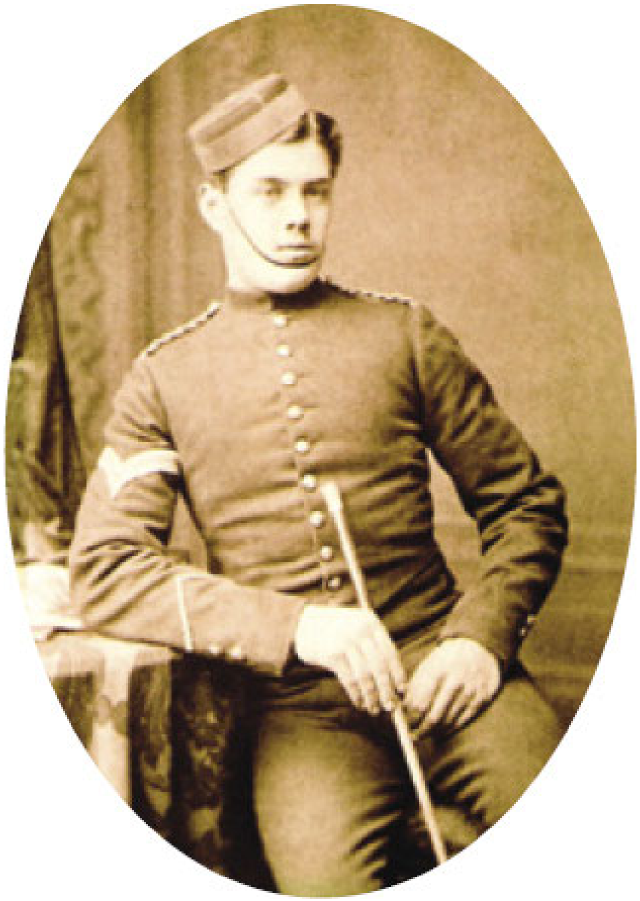
Robertson was appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff early the following year and promoted general soon afterwards. After continual disagreements with Prime Minister Lloyd George, he eventually resigned in February 1918, becoming Commander-in-Chief Home Forces and later Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Occupation. He was promoted field marshal in 1920 and granted a baronetcy. He was

Colonel of the Royal Scots Greys, the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the Blues. He died in 1933.

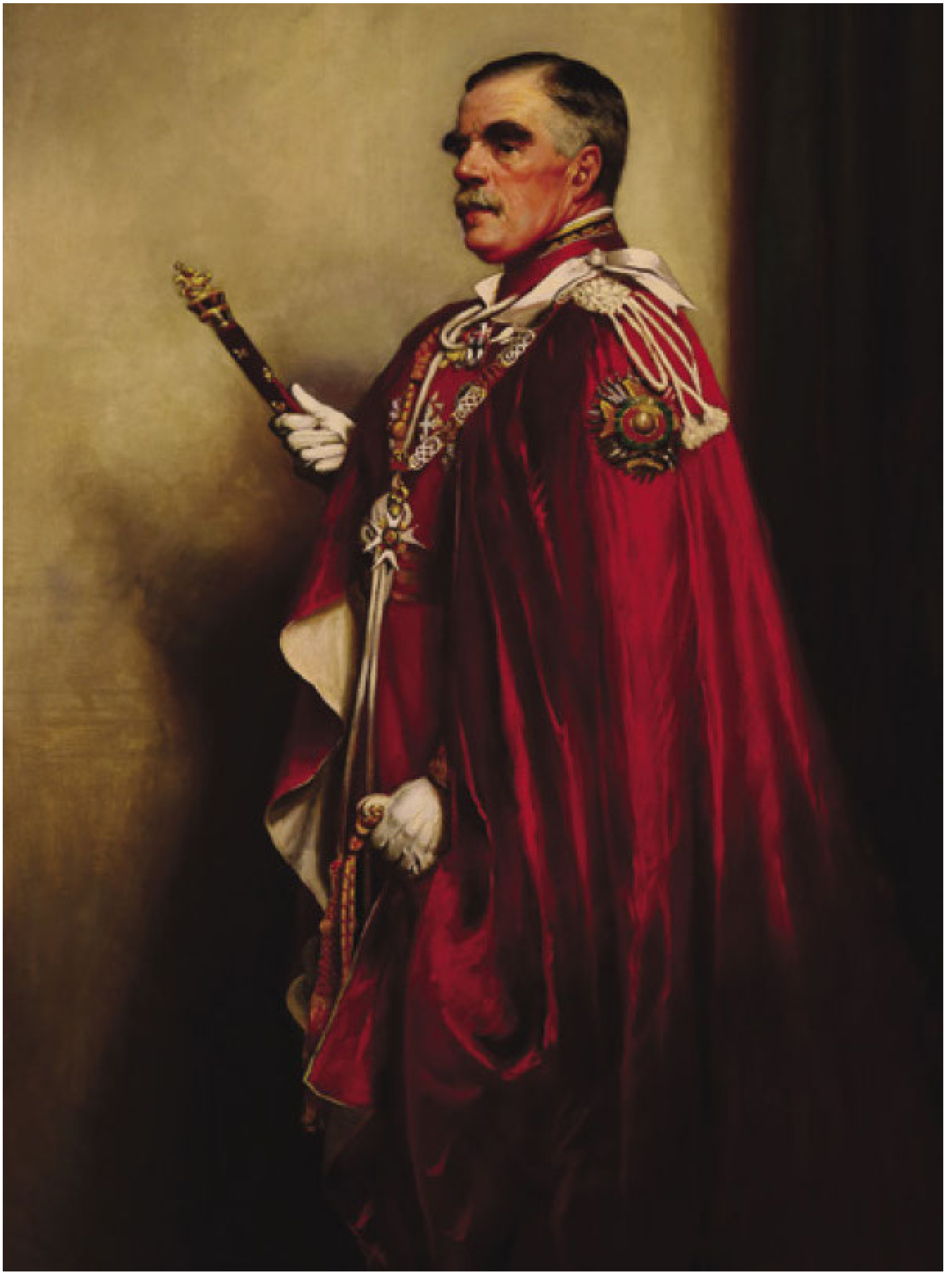
His son Brian became a general and after retirement was chairman of the British Transport Commission, a service for which he was created Baron Robertson of Oakridge. His grandson Ronald served with the Greys from 1949 to 1969.

Charles Webb

Lieutenant William Robertson, 3rd Dragoon Guards.



Corporal W. Robertson, 16th Lancers, c. 1880.



Field Marshal Sir William Robertson GCB GCMG GCVO DSO; oil on canvas by John St Helier Lander, 1921.

6TH DRAGOON GUARDS

On arrival in Madras in the autumn of 1902, the strength of the Carabiniers was increased by drafts from the 1st and the 3rd Dragoon Guards to raise it to the Indian establishment of 627 of all ranks. After two years in Madras, the regiment changed its station to Bangalore in 1904 and then moved to Mhow in 1906, having received earlier in the year a new standard from HRH The Prince of Wales, later King George V. The Carabiniers left Mhow in 1908 and were posted to South Africa to relieve the 5th Dragoon Guards at Bloemfontein. Four years later, in 1912, the regiment left South Africa and came home, to take over the 3rd Dragoon Guards' horses in Canterbury.

The regiment mobilised in four days in August 1914, its preparedness – like that of most of the rest of the army – due to the fact that it had been obvious that war was on the way for about a fortnight before the first elements of the German Army crossed the Belgian frontier and committed Britain to fighting.

The Carabiniers left Canterbury as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) ten days after the declaration of war. They were brigaded with a composite Household Cavalry regiment and the 3rd (King's Own) Hussars in the 4th Cavalry Brigade of the Cavalry Division. The division was commanded by Major General Edmund Allenby, who had formed such a high opinion of the Carabiniers during the South African War.

Belgium rapidly collapsed under the German advance and the BEF fell back before the Germans, fighting rearguard actions at Mons, Le Cateau and Guise. Several mounted engagements were fought in the early weeks of the war, while the war was still one of movement, and successes were claimed by the Carabiniers in cavalry actions against German cuirassiers and uhlans (lancers). The 4th Cavalry Brigade was ordered to hold the Mons–Condé Canal against a German assault and the regiment was given two crossing-points to defend: at Lock Five – east of Condé – and at Albert. Until being relieved by The Middlesex Regiment on the evening of 26 August, the regiment held its position on the west bank of the canal, inflicting severe casualties on the German infantry which attempted to cross it in massed waves. After withdrawal to billets behind the line, the brigade covered the general retreat from Mons, which was necessary to avoid the BEF being encircled as the Germans cut through the fleeing French armies on the British flank. Further cavalry actions were fought during the withdrawal as the Carabiniers protected the withdrawing rear of the British infantry. By penetrating so far south, the German forces had themselves been in danger of being cut off by British and French forces on their flanks and of over-extending their lines of supply. Eventually, a Franco-British line was held on the River Marne: this prevented the German forces from reaching Paris and ending the war, as Germany had planned, in six weeks. As the advance north-east from the Marne gathered speed, so the German armies fell back before it. In this rapid advance against the withdrawing enemy, the Cavalry Division was frequently employed in riding down unsupported artillery trains or cutting off isolated bodies of infantry; cavalry-to-cavalry engagements were fought too as the British advance gathered speed, almost outstripping the French. The Germans finally halted on the River Aisne, where the beginnings of the trench warfare were observed as they dug in, in the face of strong British and French forces attempting to cross the river. At the beginning of October 1914, British forces on the Aisne were relieved by the French and the BEF moved north at some speed to race the Germans to the Channel ports and prevent them from turning the Allied flank. By 19 October the BEF was in the position that it was to occupy for most of the remainder of the war: on the left of the Allied line, with Belgian and French forces between it and the sea, and centred upon Ypres.

The NCOs and men of 3 Troop, D Squadron, 6th Dragoon Guards, at Bangalore, central southern India, c. 1904.

The officers, 6th Dragoon Guards, at Bangalore, central southern India, c. 1904; the Commanding Officer was Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Sprot.

‘Maxim Gun Section The Carabiniers’, c. 1914.

A salient was formed around Ypres which was actually a bulge in the Allied line, its configuration meaning that the Germans were able to fire into it from three sides. For some time, too, the British in the salient were below German forces on surrounding ridges, which meant that the enemy possessed the great advantage of being able to observe the damage that their shelling was doing to British positions. British casualties in the Ypres salient were, not surprisingly, considerable. The Carabiniers fought dismounted in the salient’s rapidly growing trench system in various sectors during the first battle of Ypres, holding part of the line at Messines and being almost surrounded by German advances on 1 November 1914.

The Carabiniers relieved the 3rd Dragoon Guards south-east of Ypres in January 1915 and were, in turn, relieved by the Greys on 18 February, thereafter moving to billets in Ypres. The regiment was little involved in the second battle of Ypres but, during a short spell in the trenches in April 1915, claimed a shot-down German aircraft from which the pilot and observer were captured. The remainder of 1915 was quiet for the regiment.

Throughout the Somme offensive of mid-1916 the regiment's experience was similar to that of the 3rd Dragoon Guards: being moved about while awaiting an exploitable gap to open in the German lines. With the unbreakable stalemate of the increasingly sophisticated type of trench warfare that was being waged by 1916, there was little opportunity for the 'traditional' use of cavalry and although the regiment provided dismounted drafts to reinforce sectors in the front line little else of any consequence was recorded.

Officers and men of 6th Dragoon Guards in a makeshift, and wet, trench on the Western Front, probably during the winter and early in the First World War.

The regiment remained in reserve during the battle of Arras in 1917 although, after the initial success brought by the battle, it occupied trenches in the line to relieve the exhausted infantry, on whom the brunt of the fighting had fallen. Further, relatively uneventful, activities in the trenches continued, with regular reliefs, until March 1918 when the last major German offensive of the war began.

At the beginning of the offensive, the Carabiniers were encamped, resting and training, at Grandru, in Picardie, and had been warned to expect the offensive, unlike the 3rd Dragoon Guards. Dismounted, the regiment was detailed to hold the line as the offensive continued and did so under conditions of increasing chaos until it was forced to withdraw from its position on the Mennisis Canal. As the offensive began to collapse, so gaps opened in the German lines and what had been a retreat turned gradually into an advance, as – briefly – a war of stalemate became one of movement. Like the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the regiment was able to fight several mounted actions as its speed on horses enabled it quickly to exploit splits and tears in the German defences. All was not unbroken advance, though, and on occasions when the French on the flanks had given way in the face of German assaults, it often became necessary for the Cavalry Division temporarily to retreat rather than leave its flanks exposed to enemy attacks. At Cuy on 26 March 1918, a squadron of the regiment, together with one of 1st (Royal) Dragoons and 3rd Dragoon Guards, held a break in the line against the considerable weight of a German attack, thus covering the retirement to Dives.

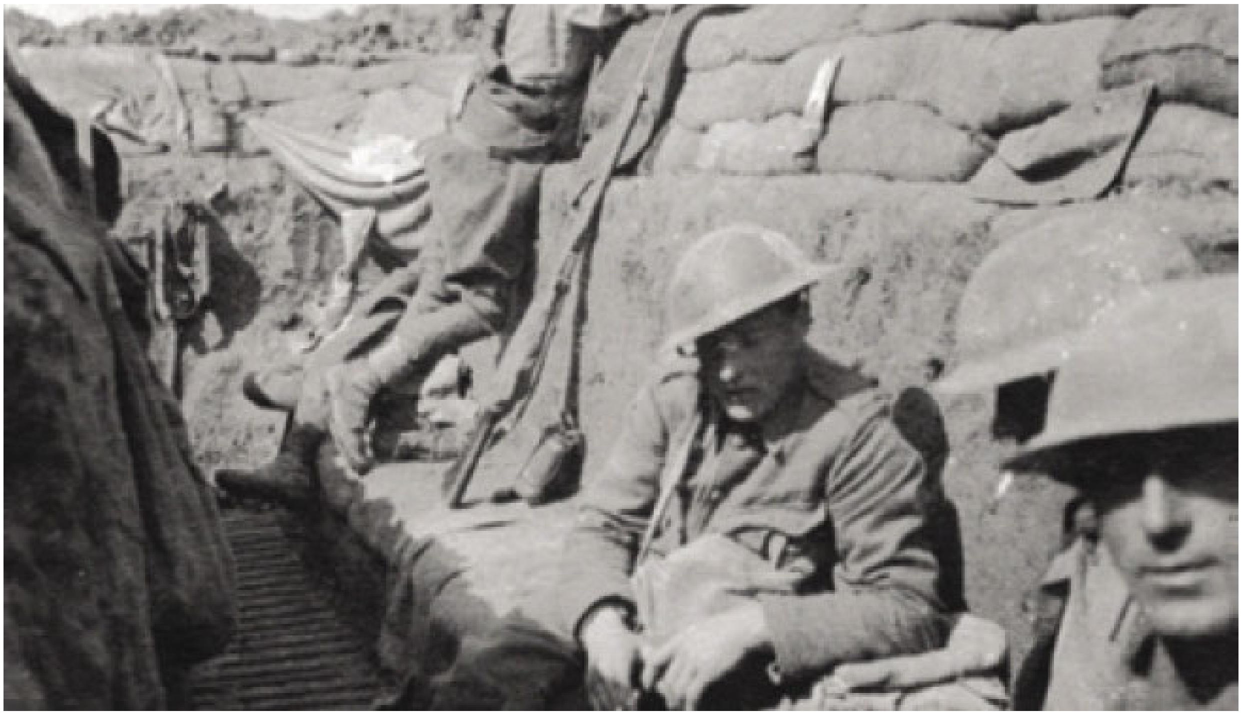
For the remainder of 1918 the Carabiniers performed mounted and dismounted duties in conjunction with the infantry, resisting the final German offensive in July and participating in the Allied attack at Amiens in August, which effectively brought the German government to the negotiating table. At the end of August the regiment provided detachments for the 17th and 35th Infantry Divisions, their function being to act in a reconnaissance role and as gallopers between units. The Carabiniers ended its war in Belgium as the rest of the army marched into Germany to enforce the armistice.

The regiment suffered 265 casualties during the war, 140 of whom were killed, died of wounds or posted missing. Forty-nine officers and men were mentioned in despatches and a large number of decorations for gallantry were awarded.

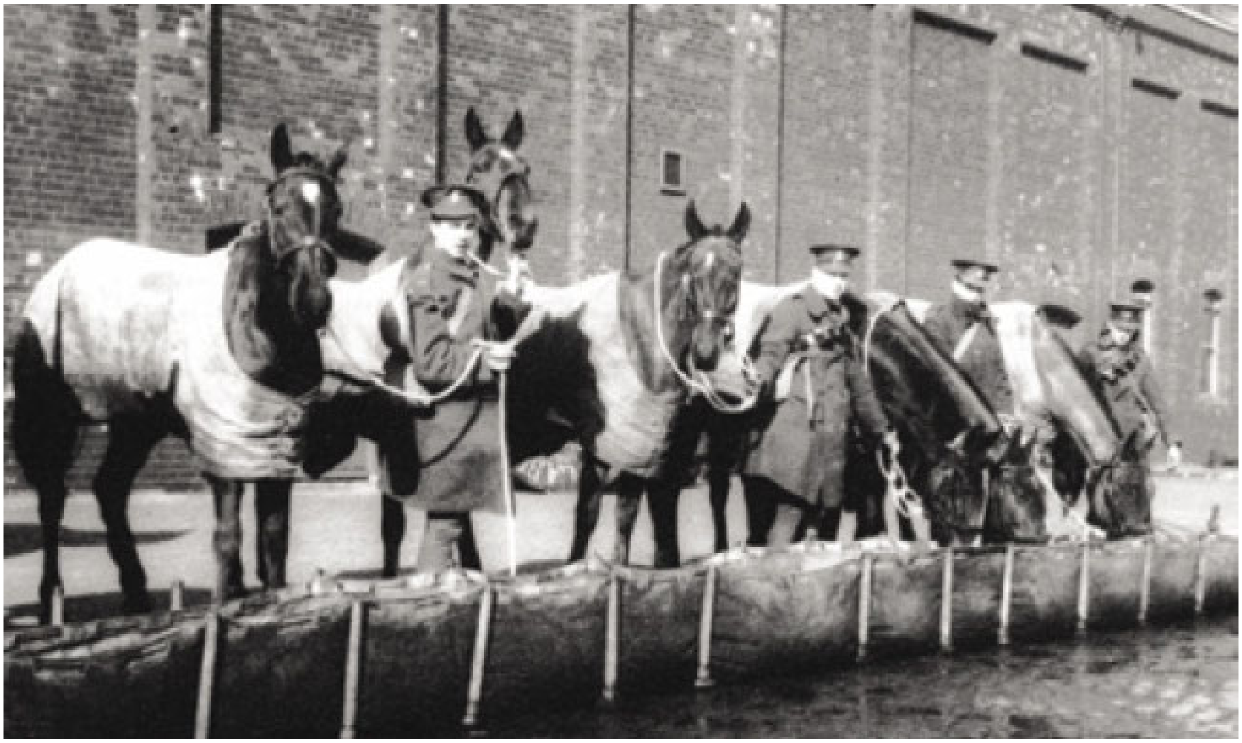
The Carabiniers left Belgium in March 1919 and moved to join the Army of Occupation at Elsdorf in Germany for six months before being posted to Ireland in September 1919.

For the last three years of its separate existence, the regiment was actively engaged in Ireland in the counter-insurgency operations against the forces of the Irish Republican Army. The campaign in Ireland was ideally suited to the cavalry but the IRA's intelligence system was so efficient that moves against its bands were often frustrated. Confronted by an unwinnable campaign – and one of which public opinion had finally had enough – British forces were withdrawn from the south of Ireland in 1922. The Irish Free State was established with its capital in Dublin and partitioned from six of the nine counties of the northern province of Ulster; the six northern counties retained their parliamentary links with mainland Britain under the title Northern Ireland.

Widespread reforms and economies in the army during the 1920s led to large numbers of amalgamations in the British and Indian armies and the cavalry, being the most expensive component of both armies, was reduced to about two-thirds its former number of regiments. The Carabiniers were ordered to reduce establishment to one squadron and to proceed to India to be amalgamated with the 3rd Dragoon Guards.



Soldiers of 6th Dragoon Guards in a properly constructed, and dry, trench on the Western Front, 1916–18. The steel helmets shown were introduced in 1916 and the waterproof canvas cover over the breech of the sentry's rifle implies that the photograph was taken during a quiet moment in their sector of the line.

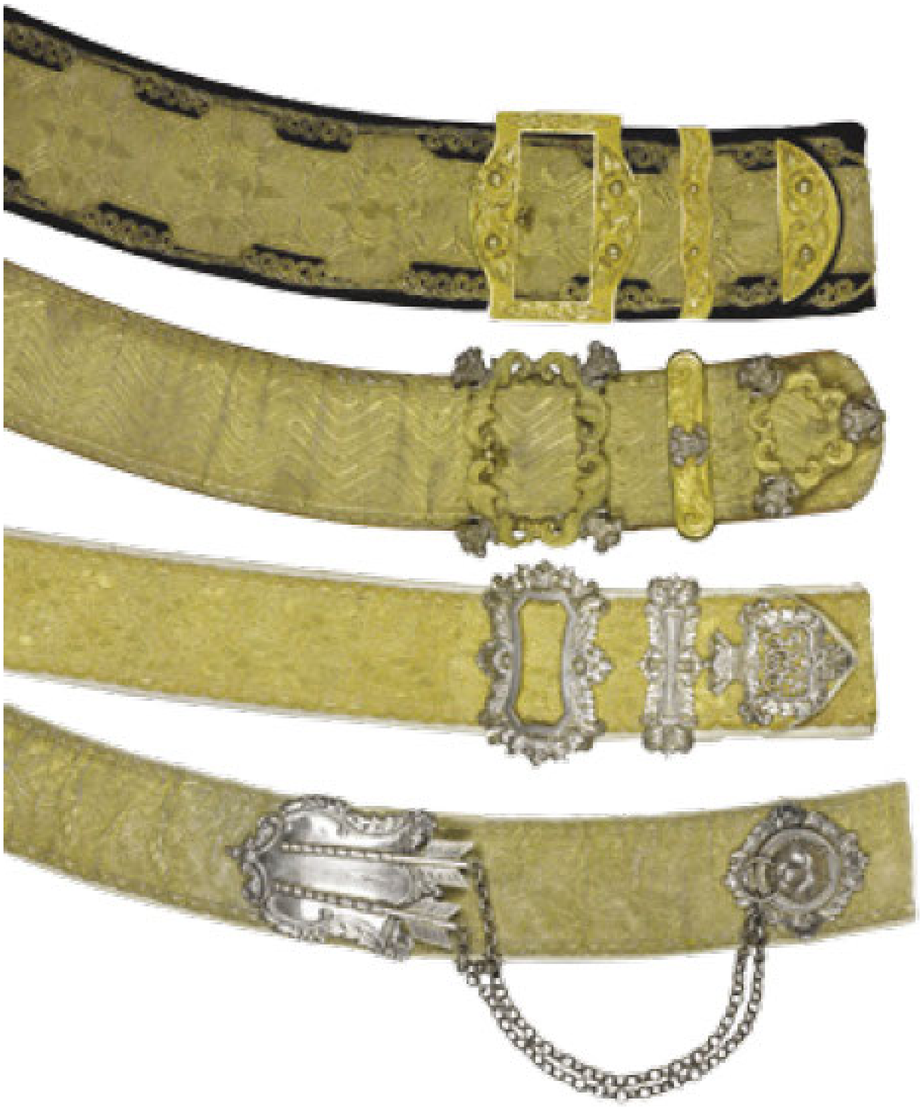


Soldiers of 6th Dragoon Guards watering their horses, North Wall, Dublin, en route from the Curragh to Aldershot, early in 1922.

Just as the Crimean War had led to sweeping changes in uniform, so did the South African War of 1899–1902. The most significant of these was the almost universal introduction of khaki uniform – formerly only worn for colonial campaigns and in India – for active service in Europe. It followed that there would no longer be any reason for Full Dress uniform to be altered to meet requirements of military utility, and since 1902 styles of Full Dress have, with minimal exceptions, remained unchanged. Patterns in existence in 1902 have altered only to reflect

amalgamations of regiments or corps, and those corps created after that date adopted Full Dress uniforms very largely in the same general style.

The changes of 1902 included the abolition of certain expensive items and features, the replacement of exotic Undress uniforms by more austere ones, and new khaki dress for wear in the field.



Accoutrements worn in mounted Review Order – officers' pouch-belt fittings. Top to bottom: 2nd Dragoons, 3rd Dragoon Guards, 6th Dragoon Guards and 6th Dragoon Guards, showing chest ornaments.

For officers of heavy cavalry, the only major changes to Full Dress were the abolition of the distinctions of rank by extra embellishment on collars and sleeves of tunics, and the replacement of gold-lace stripes on trousers by cloth ones. Sabretaches were also finally discontinued, and butcher boots replaced the officers' notched knee-boots in mounted Review Order.

In Undress, the braided frock coat gave way to a universal pattern double-breasted coat, although a braided 'frock overcoat' continued to be worn by some officers for a few years. The braided patrol jacket was replaced by a plain blue serge frock which was the forerunner of the No.1 Dress jacket. The gold-laced mess jacket and waistcoat gave way to a plain jacket with a roll collar and buttoned waistcoat, worn with a stiff shirt and black bow tie. A peaked forage cap superseded the ornate gold-laced pillbox. The new cap had a band of the regimental facing colour in the dragoon guards while that of the Greys had a white cloth vandyke band. Time was allowed for existing patterns to be worn out, and photographs show many pre-1902 items of uniform in use up to 1914, and occasionally even after 1918.

Second lieutenants were now authorised to wear a single star on all uniforms, while lieutenants and captains wore two and three respectively.

For Service Dress, the red frock was discontinued with the introduction of a khaki serge jacket of similar cut but with expanding pockets below the waist and without shoulder-chains. Greys' officers' jackets were unusual, if not unique, in having leather, rather than brass, buttons. All officers below brigadier-general, other than Staff, Household Cavalry and Foot Guards, wore a false three-pointed flap, outlined in drab worsted, on each sleeve (see page 159). Within the flap were the appropriate crowns and/or stars, while around the sleeve were drab worsted rings, one for subalterns, two for captains, three for majors and lieutenant-colonels, and four for colonels, so that rank was visible from behind. The Service Dress jacket was worn with serge or Bedford cord breeches, Sam Browne belt, brown leather gaiters and ankle boots.

Coloured field caps and blue cloaks became unofficial items, being replaced by peaked caps, similar in shape to the new forage cap but made of khaki material, and khaki greatcoats.

For other ranks, the only uniforms now issued were Full Dress and Service Dress. Full Dress was the same as before the South African War, except that the pouch belt was discarded. The Service Dress jacket was similar in style to the officers' jackets. Pantaloons were of Bedford cord, with khaki puttees, black ankle boots and brown leather bandoliers. The sword was attached to the saddle, obviating the need for a waist-belt. The headdress worn in Service Dress was initially the Brodrick, a stiff, peakless blue cap, although some units continued to wear the khaki slouch hat used during the South African War. In 1905 a khaki peaked cap was introduced, as was also a forage cap, similar in colour and shape to those of the officers, to be worn with the Full Dress tunic when off duty outside barracks.

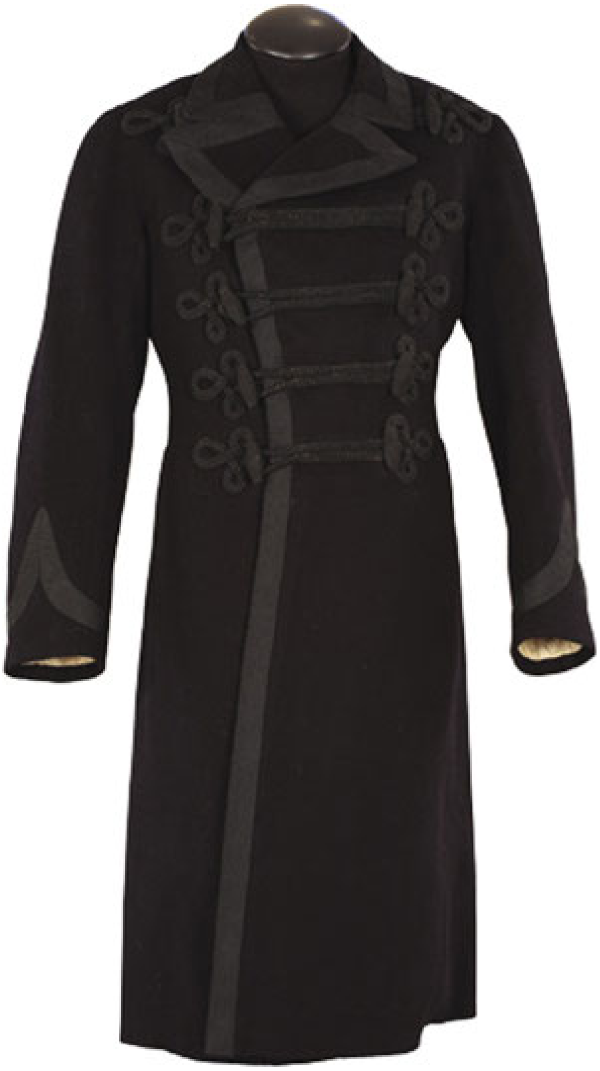
One consequence of these changes was that, since so many uniforms were now of universal pattern, regimental badges became more important. For officers, they were displayed on caps and collars in every order of dress except the blue frock. Collar badges were not worn on soldiers' Service Dress jackets, but in 1907 brass letters or numerals denoting abbreviated regimental titles were fitted on shoulder-straps.

In 1913, the closed collars on both the officers' Service Dress tunic and, optionally, also on the blue frock, were replaced by lapels. A white shirt and black tie were worn with the frock, and initially also under the khaki tunic, when not on parade. A khaki shirt and tie were worn in Service Dress on parade. Gaiters and ankle boots were ordered for officers in the 1911 Dress Regulations, but field boots (brown leather knee-boots laced at the instep) were frequently worn instead. This uniform was worn by officers throughout the First World War, the only change being that badges of rank were returned to the shoulder-straps from 1916 onwards.

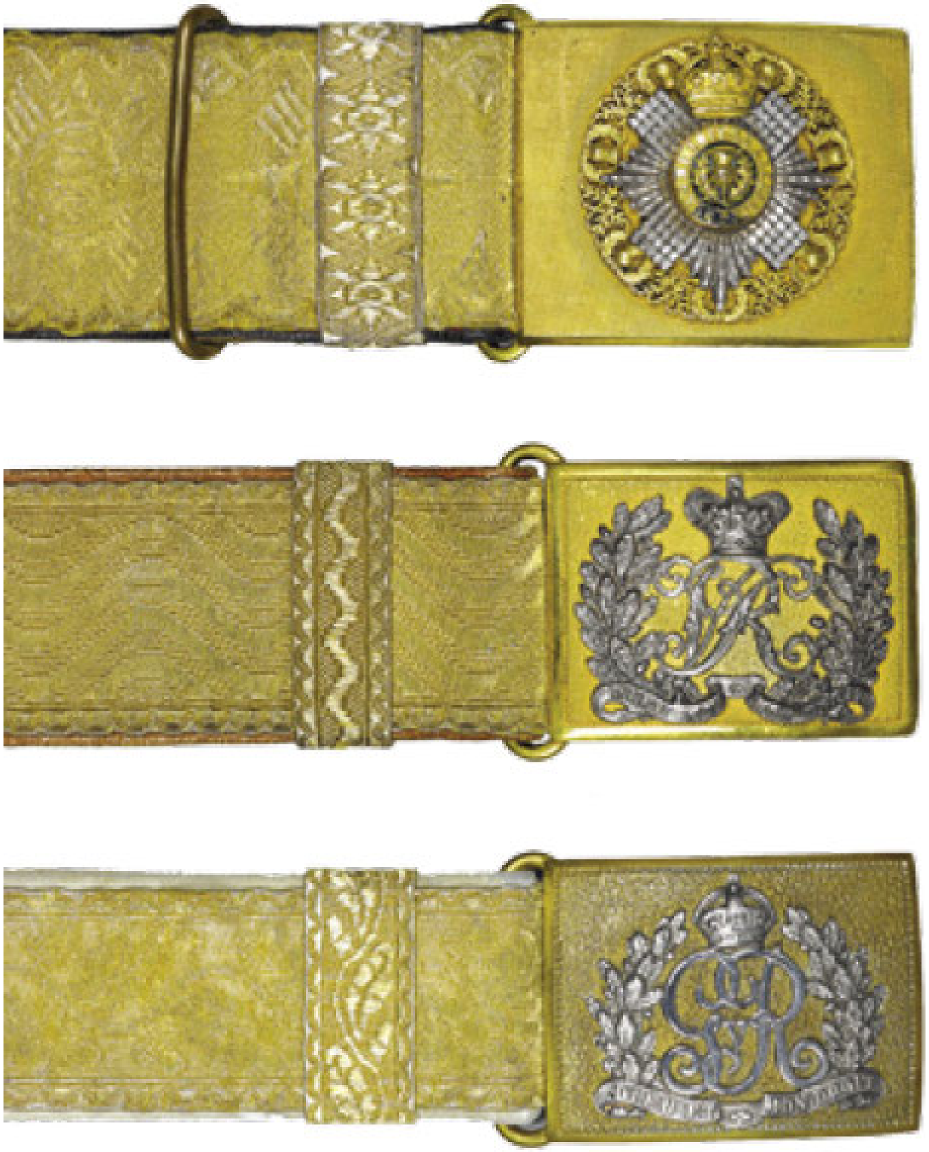
At some time in this period the Service Dress caps of the Greys acquired the black welt in the crown, which is still worn in the caps of the present regiment. It would be tempting to think that this was introduced in

memory of their murdered Colonel-in-Chief, the Tsar of Russia, but no evidence for this has come to light.

Charles Webb



Frock overcoat of Tsar Nicholas II c. 1905.



Accoutrements worn in mounted Review Order – officers' waist-belt fittings. Top to bottom: 2nd Dragoons, 3rd Dragoon Guards and 6th Dragoon Guards.

ROYAL SCOTS GREYS

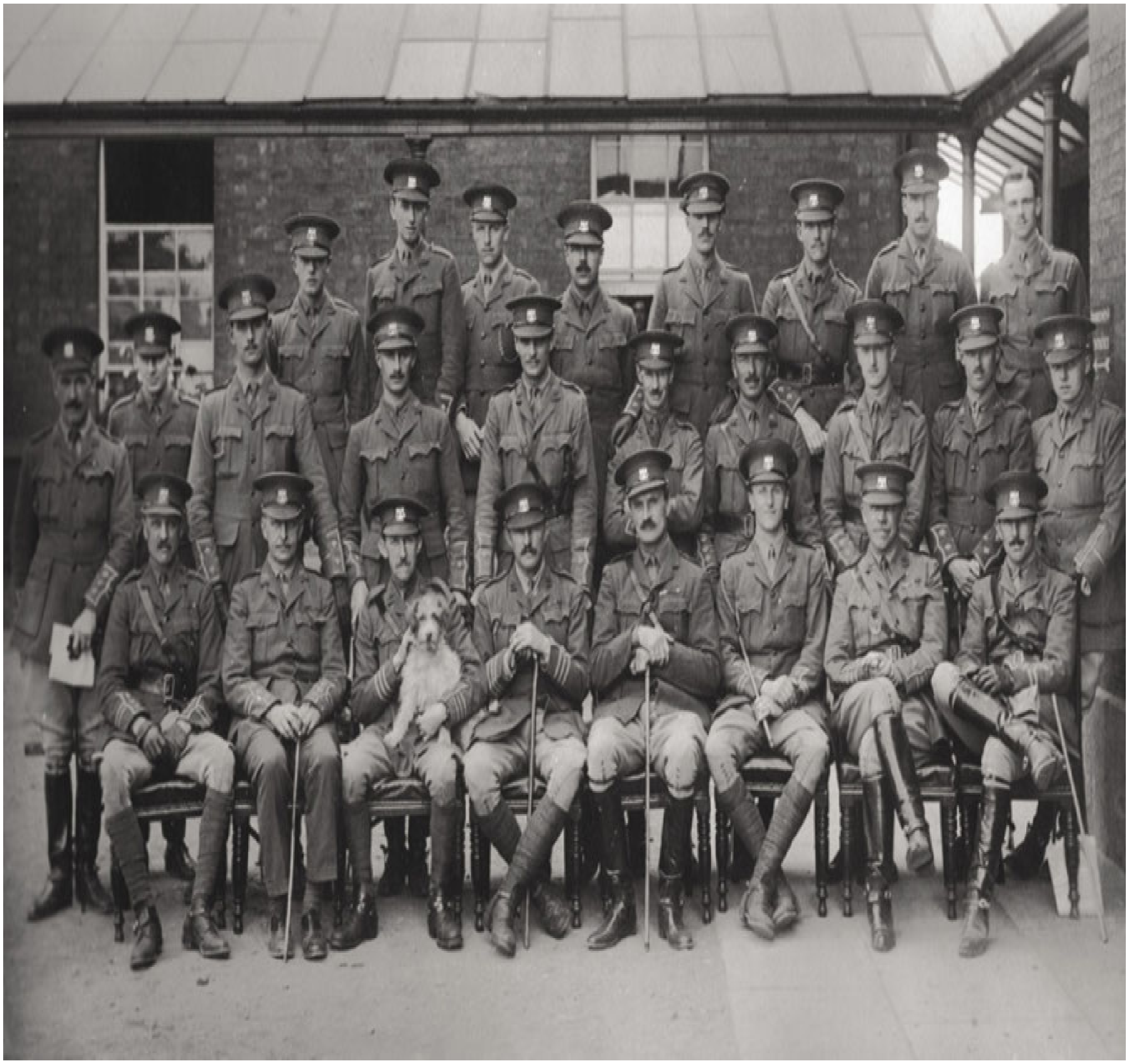
Remaining in Cape Colony until 1904, the Greys returned to Britain in that year and stayed at home, stationed in various areas of Britain, until the outbreak of the First World War. The Edwardian years were much the same for the Greys as they were for any other British, or indeed Indian, cavalry regiment which saw no active service. Training and various forms of recreation, together with the changes in the army mentioned above, occupied the regiment's time but not to the extent that its efficiency as a fighting unit was impaired. Demonstrating this is the fact that mobilisation, when ordered on 3 August 1914, was achieved by the Greys within five days.

The regiment formed part of the 5th Cavalry Brigade, with the 12th (The Prince of Wales's Royal) Lancers and 20th Hussars as the rest of the cavalry element. The brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General Sir Philip Chetwode, Bt., DSO; he later became a field marshal and a peer and was Colonel of the Regiment from 1925 to 1947. The Greys arrived in France on 18 August and were moved up to the Belgian border to await the inevitable onslaught.

One of the earliest tasks which the Greys, alone of all the British cavalry regiments, had to undertake was the camouflaging of its horses. Observing a regiment of greys, any spy seeing them all together in the line would easily be able to recognise the regiment and, by extrapolation from the barely secret order of battle, be able to work out what other regiments were likely to be in the vicinity. This camouflaging had been carried out in South Africa during the Second South African War and involved staining the grey horses with Condy's Fluid, a proprietary preparation of calcium and permanganate of potash commonly used as a household disinfectant that resulted in a purple or dark-brown dye. As long as the horses remained relatively un-sweated and not rained on, the resulting chestnut colour was reputed to last about a month. What appears not to be recorded is whether, as a counter-intelligence move, other regiments positioned elsewhere were instructed to dye their horses grey. Duly camouflaged, the regiment waited on the Belgian border near Binche, between Charleroi and Mons, on the extreme right of the British Expeditionary Force.

After a series of minor engagements with the enemy, principally as the Germans advanced comparatively slowly in a series of connected feints, testing the defences before them, the regiment fell back with the remainder of the cavalry to cover the retreat from Mons to the Marne. The retreat happened so fast, and involved such confusion, that it is not surprising that the regiment temporarily mislaid one of its French interpreters, a volunteer called Paul Maze (1887–1979). Maze awoke in a village to find that the Greys had left and that the village was occupied by German uhlans; escaping, he made his way in the general direction of the retreat, only to be arrested by the British on suspicion of being a spy. About to be shot as such, without trial, Maze was recognised by Major Foster Swetenham, commanding C Squadron, as the regiment passed through the village where he was under guard and he was able to rejoin the Greys. A couple of hours after he saved Maze's life, Swetenham was killed in a brief but bloody engagement between the regiment and a force of German cavalry which was seeking to surround part of the rearguard of the retreat. In 1934, Maze dedicated his book A Frenchman in Khaki to the officer who had saved his life. Shortly after being rescued by Swetenham, Maze left the regiment to be attached as an interpreter to the British Army staff. He later became a distinguished artist who, having met and befriended Winston Churchill during the First World War, became Churchill's advisor on artistic technique. In 1978 Maze presented the regiment with a painting of elements of its Full Dress uniform, in commemoration of the tercentenary of the raising of the Greys.

After helping to cover the retreat to the Marne, the Greys – as part of the 5th Cavalry Brigade – led the British 2nd Army Corps in the advance from the Marne to the Aisne. Once that river was crossed and the French established upon it in strength, the 5th Brigade led the BEF again in the 100-mile dash to Amiens as part of the race against the Germans to the coast. From Amiens the BEF turned north-west until joined in mid-October by the 3rd Cavalry Division, which had recently arrived on the Western Front.

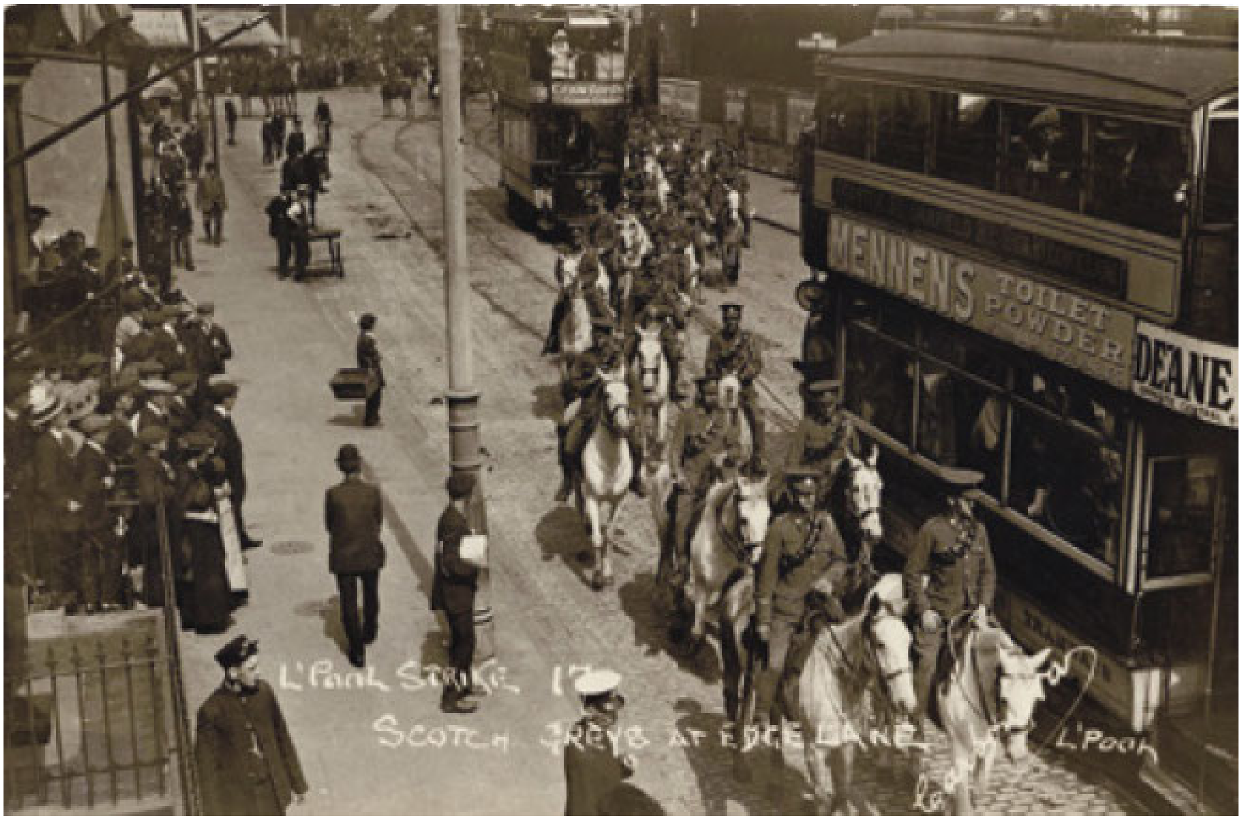


Officers, the Royal Scots Greys, York, 1914. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Bulkeley-Johnson, is seated fourth from right in the front row; he was killed in action as a brigadier at Monchy-le-Preux on 11 April 1917. To his right is seated Major Foster Swetenham, killed in action on 28 August 1914 and reputedly the first British officer to be killed during the First World War.

The Greys were stationed at Fulford Cavalry Barracks, York, from 1910 until they left for the Great War. All accounts suggest that they settled into local life well and quickly and that they appeared to be popular with the people of York.

Shortly after arrival the regiment qualified for the York Football League, a three-division league with thirty teams. The Greys were in the first division for their entire time in York, although they never won the league. They competed not against other regiments but against teams drawn from nearby towns and societies and works teams such as the John Smith Brewery, Rowntree's and Terry's.

Equally active in equestrian sport, the Greys quickly got involved in local racing. The card for the Kilvington meeting in April 1911 lists the Royal Scots Greys Challenge Cup as one of the races. It was recorded subsequently in The Yorkshire Post that 'The Officer Class competed against the aristocracy, represented by Lord Eliot and Viscount Ebrington.'



The Liverpool strike: Scots Greys at Edge Lane, August 1911. (By permission of Liverpool Records Office, Liverpool Library © Carbonara Photography)

That same year, the interest generated by the regiment was reflected in an entry in the diary of Coxwold village school, north of York: 'July 25, 1911. The Royal Scots Greys are on manoeuvres in the vicinity of the school, so pupils allowed to leave early at 3.30pm'.

While the Greys were well received by the residents of York, they may not have been so popular with the workers of Salford and Liverpool. In June and July of 1911 there was a general strike in Salford, started by the dockworkers. Although it did not escalate to violence, two squadrons of the regiment were sent there as a pre-emptive measure.

On 10 August two squadrons of the Greys arrived in Liverpool during the transport workers' strike, which later developed into riots. They were deployed to help the police keep order. When rioting did break out, it was reported that the military commander prevented wholescale slaughter when he 'exercised the right' to refuse the police request to shoot into the crowd. The height of the unrest was Sunday 13 August 1911, which became known locally as 'Bloody Sunday'.

In 1912 the regiment headed south for the army manoeuvres. The Greys were part of the Red Army under Lieutenant-General Sir Douglas Haig, arrayed along the north-west Norfolk coast with orders to march on London. The Blue Army, commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir James Grierson, in defence around Cambridge, won a decisive victory. These were to be the last full-scale manoeuvres before the war.

During an earlier posting to York in 1878, the Greys had established a relationship with the Scottish Presbyterian Church in York. Recently founded, the church had a larger-than-life minister, the Reverend James Collie, who became chaplain to the regiment. In 1910 the link was taken up again. The minister by then, 'the young and energetic' John McIlvride, became chaplain to the Greys and on occasions would take the salute as the regiment paraded for church. It was decided that it was inappropriate to have an unmounted minister and Mr McIlvride was given a grey for parish as well as regimental use.

L'POOL STRIKE 35
SCOTCH GREYS AWAITING ORDERS
Carbonara L'POOL

The Liverpool strike: Scots Greys awaiting orders. (By permission of Liverpool Records Office, Liverpool Library © Carbonara Photography)

Inside the church a raised gallery was built specifically for the other ranks of the Scottish regiments in York and it is reached without entering the main body of the church. The local families and officers would be given communion at the altar while the soldiers in the gallery had to wait until they filed out of the church. It was felt that it would take too much time to bring the other ranks to the altar, so the sacrament was administered at the bottom of the steps leading from the gallery – in two lines to speed up the process.

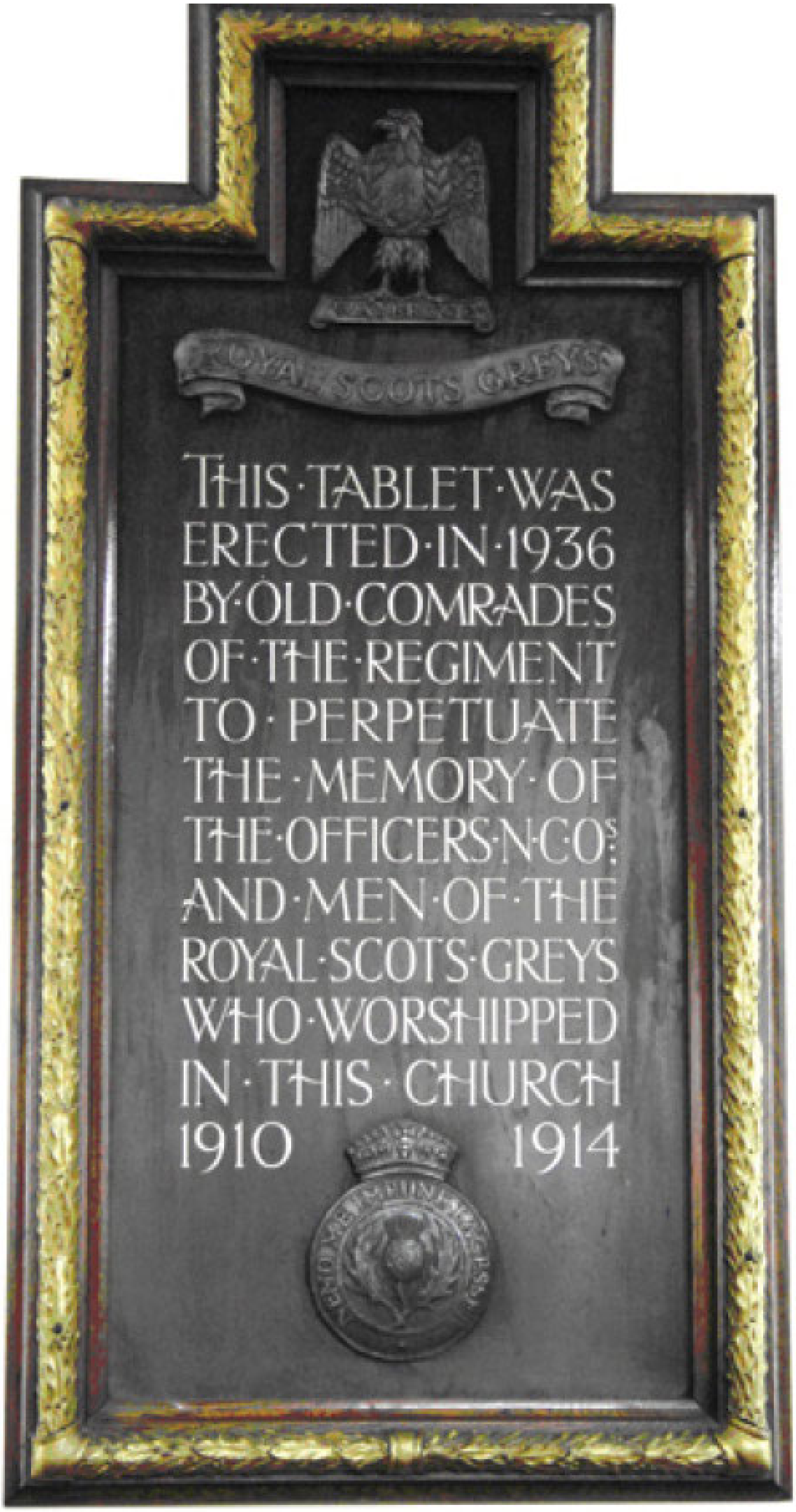
The regiment had to take the minister's grey horse when they left for war and, perhaps by way of compensation, but more likely in

appreciation, they gave an annual donation of £100 for some years afterwards.

When Mr Collie died in 1912 his family donated three stained-glass windows to the church. One is in memory of the minister; flanking it to the right is a window dedicated to the Greys, and to the left a window dedicated to the Black Watch.

In 1936 a tablet was erected in the church to remember those of the Greys who worshipped there between 1910 and 1914. Today a representative of the regiment lays a Scots DG wreath by the tablet each Remembrance Sunday.

Nicholas Orr


ROYAL SCOTS GREYS
NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT

THIS·TABLET·WAS
ERECTED·IN·1936
BY·OLD·COMRADES
OF·THE·REGIMENT
TO·PERPETUATE
THE·MEMORY·OF
THE·OFFICERS·N·C·O^{s}:
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1910 1914

The memorial tablet in St Columba’s church, York. (Courtesy of St Columba’s Church, York)

Captain Henry Denison-Pender MC (left) and Captain George Pigot-Moodie MC (right), the Royal Scots Greys, Quiestède, near St Omer, late 1915. In early 1915, both had been the first officers of the regiment to be awarded the newly instituted Military Cross; in September 1915, Pigot-Moodie received the Russian Order of St Anne, 2nd class, with swords, the ribbon of which he is shown wearing, next to that of the MC. The helmets worn, anti-gas 'hypo-helmets' or 'British smoke hoods', were among the first British reactions to the Germans' use of poison gas.

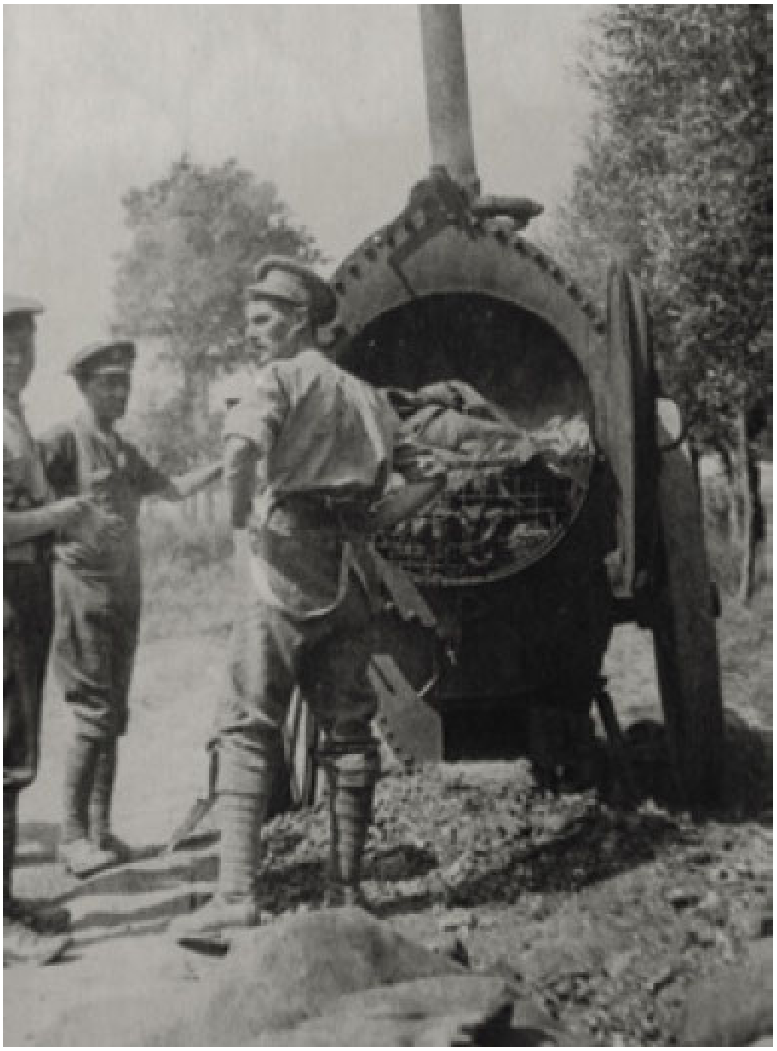
During the first battle of Ypres the Greys occupied trenches and fought as infantry, as did the majority of the cavalry in that sector. The soldiers rapidly became used to their bayonets and caused many casualties among the waves of advancing Germans by the accuracy and rapidity of their rifle fire. The regiment's last action of note in 1914 was that at Wytschaete, where C Squadron continued in action, pouring volley after volley into the advancing German infantry, until the troop leaders were forcibly restrained and ordered to retire by the Commanding Officer, who was about to hand over the position to the French.

Throughout the second year of the war, the Greys alternated duties between spells in the trenches and spells behind the lines, resting and training. In this, the regiment's experience was little different to that of any other British cavalry regiment. The stalemate nature of the war had been recognised, if not accepted, and so – while horses were retained both as part of the training process and in the event of an opportunity arising to use them – the Greys and their fellow cavalry regiments were increasingly trained to be infantry, including grenade training among their acquired skills. The regiment was stationed beside the Carabiniers during the second battle of Ypres in April 1915 where – fortunately, since no gas masks had been issued – it avoided the effects of the Germans' first gas attack.

Earlier in April 1915, the 2nd Cavalry Division had held a horse show at which the regiment had carried off three first prizes. These shows were to be repeated in 1916 and 1917 and two of the silver cups that were awarded at these latter events are now in the possession of the Sergeants' Mess. Events of this kind, which were unique to the cavalry only in their equestrian nature, were relatively common throughout periods of the war when the front was quiet and when bodies of troops could be withdrawn for rest and recuperation. An event that was believed to be unique to the Greys was the officers' celebration of Waterloo Day, 18 June 1915, when twenty-three of them, and the Medical Officer, celebrated the centenary of the battle over dinner at Staple.

At the end of 1915 the Greys provided a dismounted troop to serve in a battalion of dismounted cavalry intended for frequent postings to the trenches. In the first five weeks of its service the Greys' dismounted troop sustained sixty-five casualties, the majority from the effects of a mine exploding beneath their trenches.

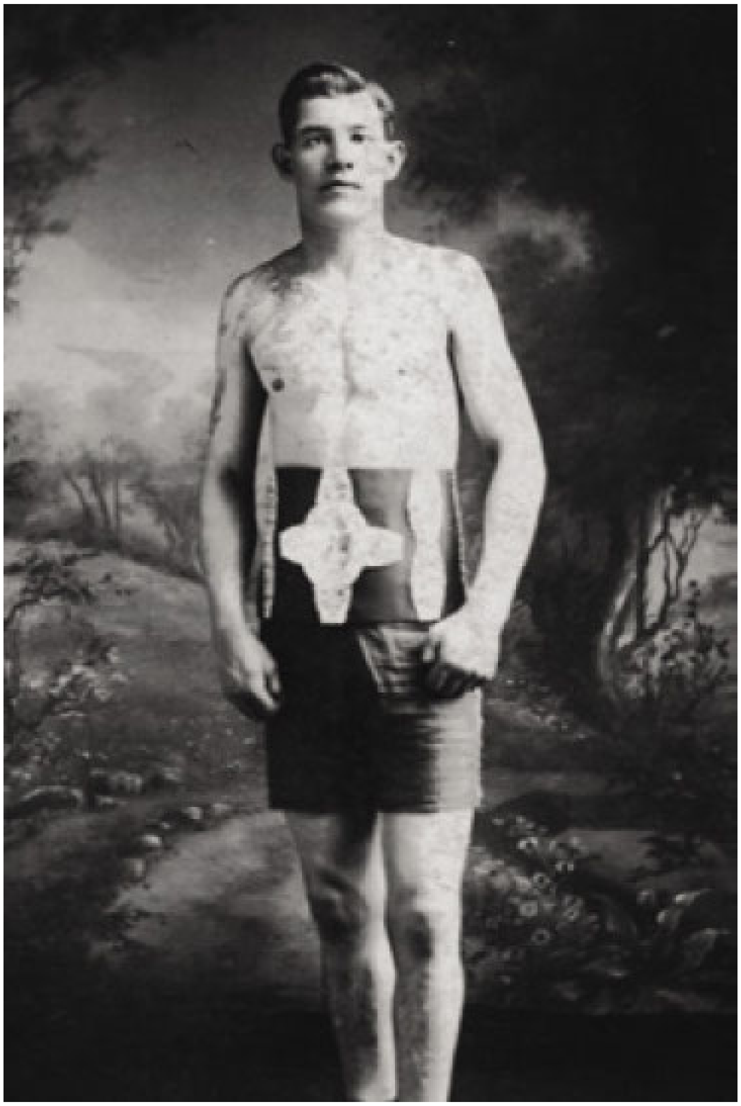
For the Greys, as for the remainder of the cavalry, 1916 was a year of some inaction and, as a result, of considerable frustration at the lack of opportunity for mounted warfare in the absence of the expected breakthroughs after the battle of the Somme. Steel helmets were issued for the first time; looking like upside-down soup plates, they did not greatly appeal to the traditionalists. However a Greys' soldier – thought to be Private Andrew McConnachie and probably the squadron comedian – was larking about with one on when he sustained a direct hit from a piece of anti-aircraft shrapnel. He lived, suffering nothing worse than a headache. Learning from Private McConnachie's experience, the regiment readily adopted the steel helmets, emblazoning them with painted yellow saltires and, later, with printed symbols indicating squadron allegiances.



Soldiers of the Royal Scots Greys fumigating their uniforms at Nieppe, near Armentières, c. 1915.

NCOs and men, with their grey mounts, in France and Flanders during the First World War. The absence of steel helmets and the soft tops to the soldiers' caps may suggest a date of c. 1915–16 for this photograph.

The year 1917, like 1916, promised well for a mounted break-out but despite optimistic forecasts for the battle of Arras the cavalry was unable to be used in its mounted role, instead providing detachments of dismounted officers and men for service in the trenches. The deployment of dismounted cavalry as machine gunners increased and all machine-gun sections within the cavalry brigades were organised together into machine-gun squadrons. At the same time, each squadron received a Hotchkiss light machine gun for each of its troops and one section from each troop was organised as a Hotchkiss section. The cavalry was being taught all about how to use the weapon that had emasculated it in its traditional role; it was also displaying the adaptability that had characterised regiments of dragoons since their original formation. During May and June the Greys fielded an entire dismounted regiment of three squadrons – each of 100 men – and served in trenches at Guillemont Farm. While there, a body of Greys volunteers conducted a highly successful raid into the German trenches opposite, causing many casualties and gathering a great deal of useful intelligence material: two Military Crosses and eleven Military Medals were awarded in recognition of the bravery of the officers and men involved – the Military Cross at that time being restricted for award to officers.



‘Private Riddle’, the Royal Scots Greys, wearing the silver-mounted belt presented to him by the Boulogne Garrison Boxing Club in 1916. ‘Private Riddle’ may have been Private John Riddell, a native of Elgin, who joined the Household Cavalry before transferring to the Greys and who died of wounds on 29 November 1917; he is buried in Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Military Cemetery at Étricourt-Manancourt in Picardy.

During the German offensive of March 1918 the regiment was affected by much the same chaos and disorganisation resulting from the strength and impetus of the advance as was the rest of the army. Although the offensive had been foreseen, no one had predicted just how overwhelming its strength would be: about four-to-one in the Germans' favour. The Greys were split up, dismounted and very busy indeed, with sections tearing about the line trying to stem the advance, plug gaps in the defences and fall back in good order, all at the same time. As the strength of the last serious German offensive of the war petered out, so the Greys formed part of the inexorable advance north and east that eventually resulted in the armistice in November 1918. The Allied advance east, when it began in August 1918, was rapid and effective. It encountered little real opposition since the domestic German infrastructure was disintegrating and morale was low; the will to continue the war was largely absent. At the end of October 1918 the Greys caught a whiff of the influenza epidemic which was a precursor of that which was to sweep through Europe after the armistice and kill more people than had lost their lives in the war: this was so serious that the regiment was immobilised and severely reduced in effective numbers for a time.

The silver-mounted belt and silver cup awarded to 'Private Riddle', the Royal Scots Greys, winner of the Boulogne Garrison Boxing Championship in 1916.

The 5th Cavalry Brigade headed the march into Germany after the armistice, the Greys having had a few days to smarten up and send to York for the guidon. The brigade entered Belgium on 17 November 1918 and crossed the border into Germany on 1 December, to occupy billets around the town of Neudorf. After spending three weeks in Germany the regiment returned to Belgium and to a type of normality. Life began again in the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes; a pack of hounds was organised and several race meetings held. Demobilisation and requests for leave having taken their inevitable and rapid toll, a much-depleted regiment finally left Antwerp on 22 March 1919, bound for Southampton. Its casualties during the war were 143 of all ranks killed or missing and 446 wounded.

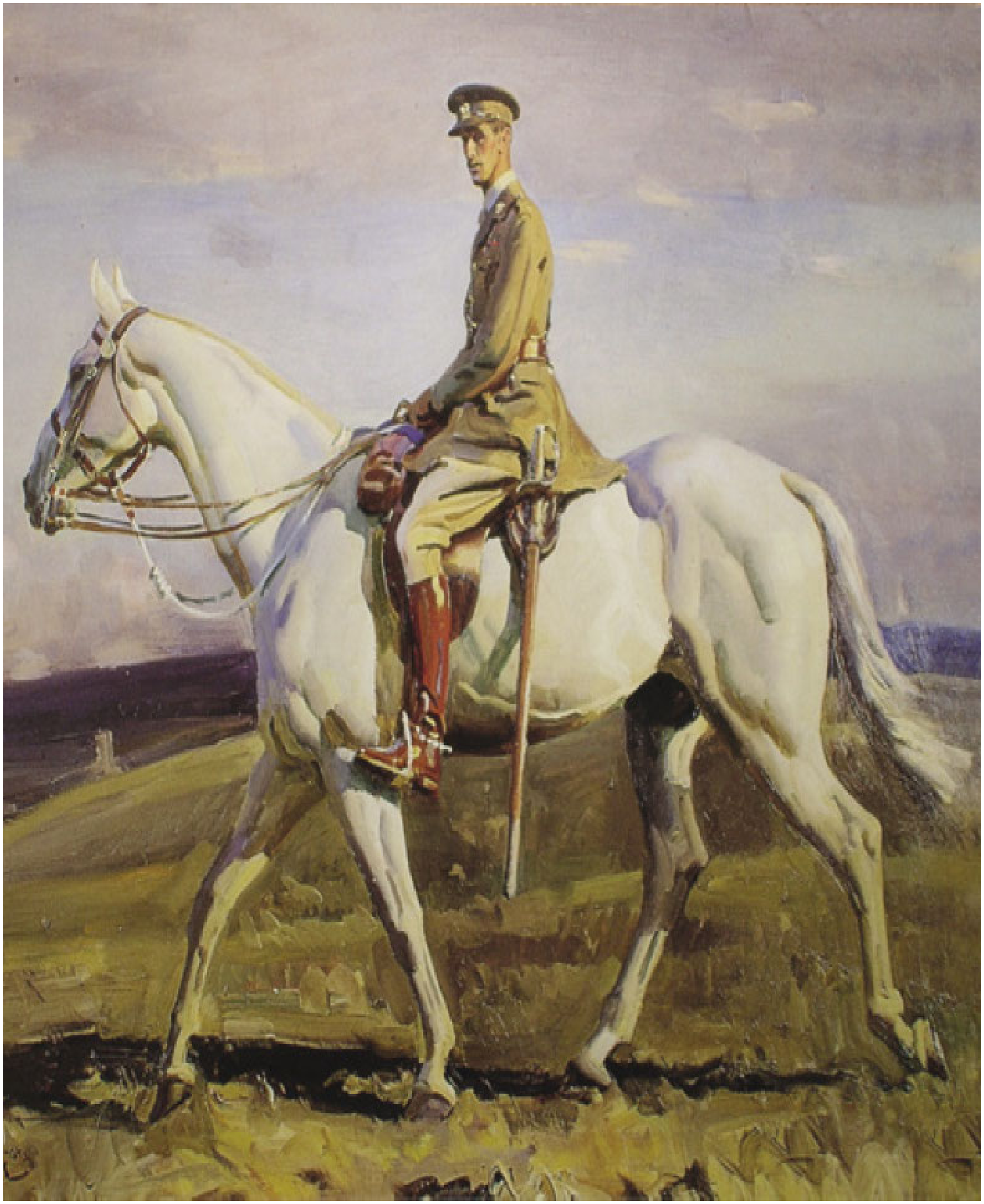
Grey Lady was sent to France as an officer's charger in 1914 with the Royal Scots Greys. She was one of only eight greys to survive the war and returned home in 1918. Many of the horses that survived the fighting were deemed unfit to return home and were destroyed, while others were sold locally. Grey Lady returned to Britain and was sold on at a Tattersalls auction. Suffering from shell shock and a bullet wound, she was bought by the Bonham family and retired to Major Bonham's home where she eventually died at the age of twenty-five.

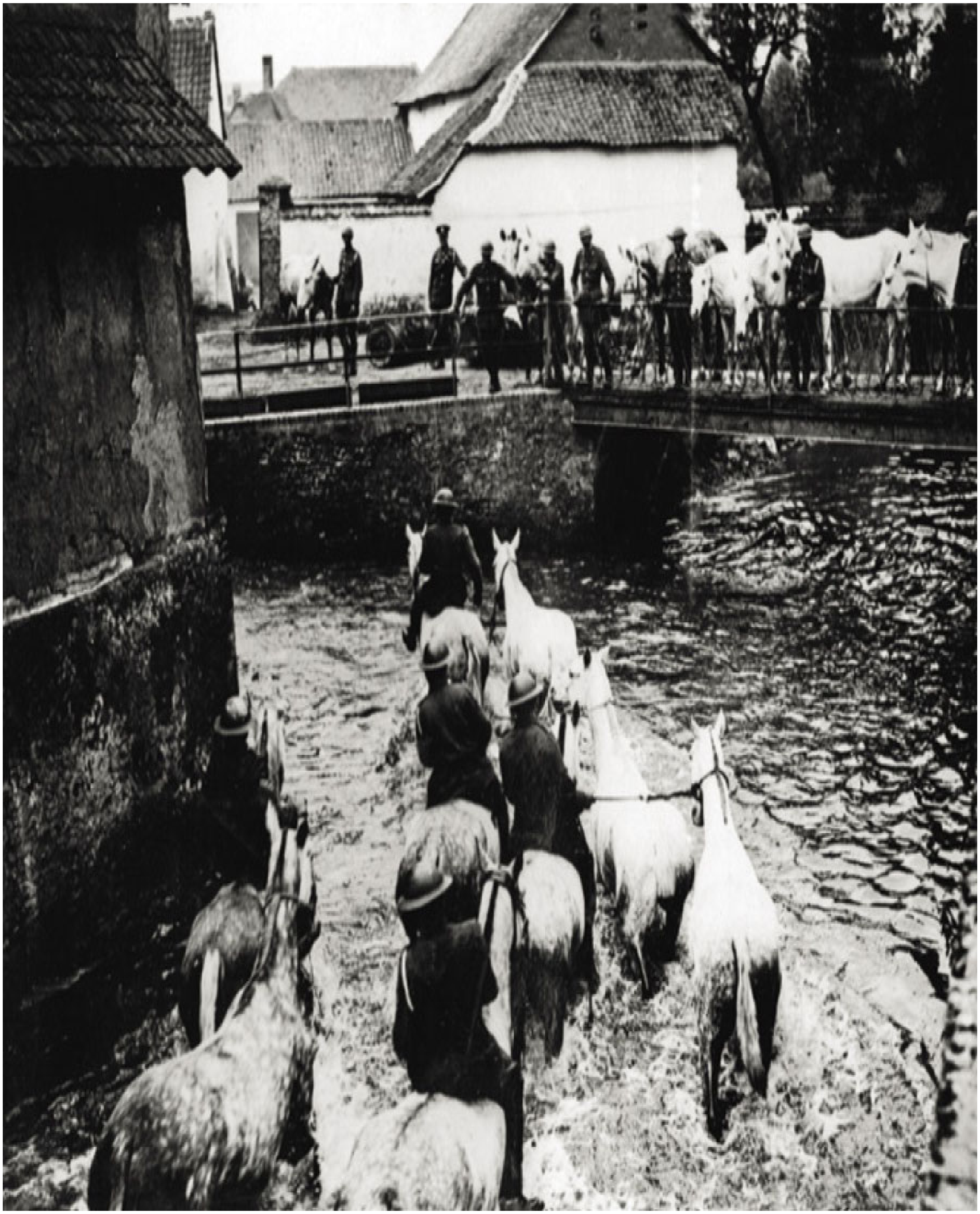
Major Sir Eric Bonham served with the Royal Scots Greys from 1901 to 1919. From 1913 to 1926 he was Comptroller of the Household of HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught, himself a Greys' officer and later the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief (1921–35). Sir Eric's son, Major Sir Anthony Bonham, served with the regiment from 1937 to 1948.

Sir Alfred Munnings was born in 1878 in Mendham, Suffolk. At the start of the First World War he enlisted, but having lost an eye in an accident in 1899 he was initially sent to work in a remount depot near Reading. He later went to France as an official war artist with the Canadian Cavalry Brigade.

Munnings was an enthusiastic horseman and his greatest works are either of the racecourse or of hunting scenes, though he also painted portraits and many rural landscapes. As well as showing his fluid and confident brushstrokes, Grey Lady (1919) also demonstrates a curious foible of the artist: common to many Munnings horses, her near and off-side legs move in unison, a highly unnatural movement for a horse. After a long loan to the regimental museum the painting was returned to the Bonham family in 2012. Major General Charles Ramsay and his son, Captain William Ramsay, generously gave a copy to the Officers' Mess.

Bruce Ridge





Soldiers of the Royal Scots Greys watering their horses at Brimeux, near Montreuil-sur-Mer, late in 1918.

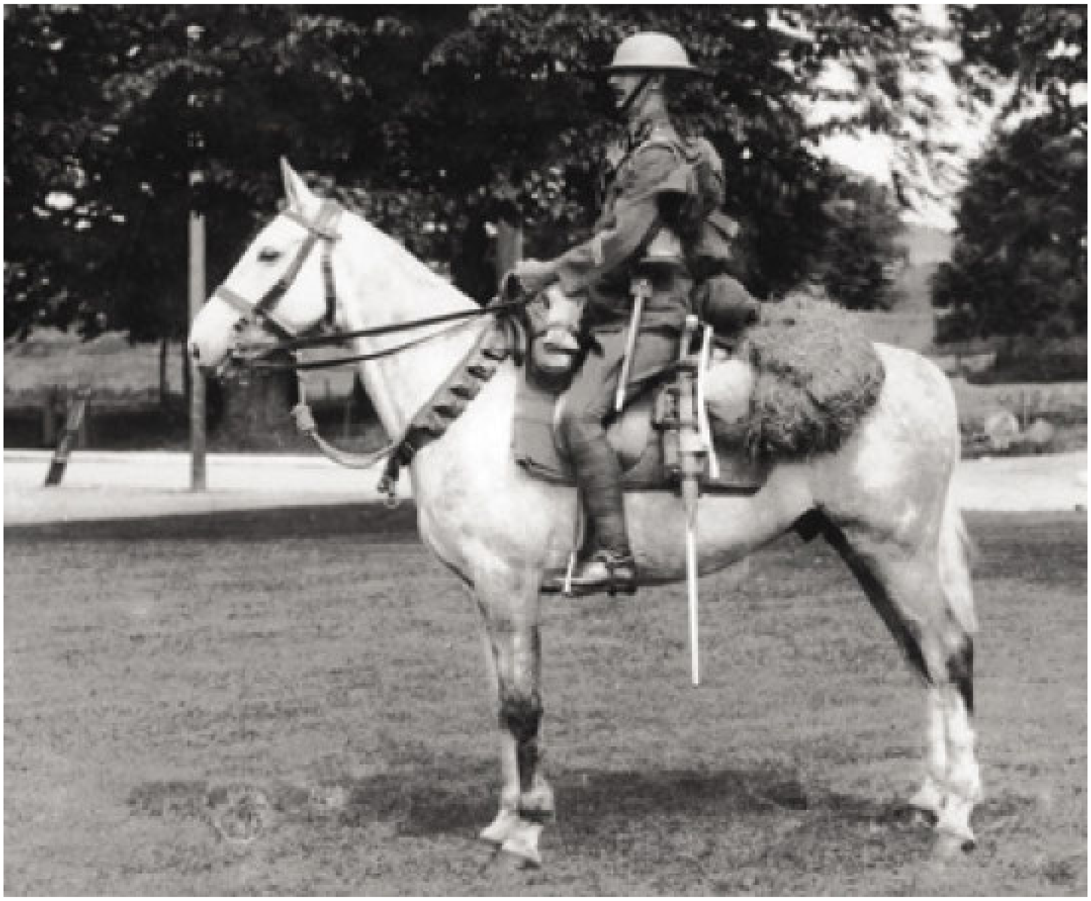
After being stationed for a year at home, at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh, the Greys were warned for service overseas, the first time that the regiment as a whole would have served overseas in peacetime and the ending of a tradition, shared with the Household Cavalry, of serving overseas only in time of war. At first, service in India was foreseen but service in Egypt was the reality and, after a hectic round of equestrian events – the Sprot Cup (regimental cross-country race), the Regimental Grey Horse Race, the Regimental Point-to-Point and a polo tournament at Murrayfield – the regiment left from Southampton on 10 November 1920 and arrived in Alexandria on 22 November. The grey horses, not able to be taken to Egypt, were handed over to the 1st (The King's) Dragoon Guards, who relieved the Greys in Edinburgh.

1922-23
H.Q. AND A SQDN
RSG
THE WINKEM TROPHY

The Winram Trophy – a silver model of a Red Cross parcel of the type sent to British prisoners of war. The trophy was presented by the 'Fund for British Soldiers interned in Germany', of which Mrs James Winram was organiser and honorary secretary, to the Royal Scots Greys in Edinburgh in 1920. It was to be 'competed-for annually by the NCOs and Men of the Royal Scots Greys and awarded to the squadron gaining the highest number of points in Sports Competition, as decided by the Officers of the Regiment'.

Nationalist fervour in Egypt had abated only a little in the aftermath of the war and a new and resurgent republican Turkey was making its presence felt in Near East politics. Although the Egypt posting was one filled with possibilities for active service, nothing major occurred in the year that the Greys spent there and the usual recreations of hunting, shooting and polo were pursued. In November 1921 the regiment moved to Palestine. Palestine had been carved out of the territories of the old Turkish Empire and was being administered under mandate by the British, who did their best to keep the indigenous Arabs from murdering the small number of Jewish settlers who were arriving from Europe. Raids on the Jewish settlements continued however, despite the regiment maintaining a squadron and two troops at short notice to move; poor communications between the settlements and the garrison hindered the regiment's effectiveness.

In 1921, while the regiment was in the Middle East, its title changed, from '2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys)' to 'The Royal Scots Greys (2nd Dragoons)'.

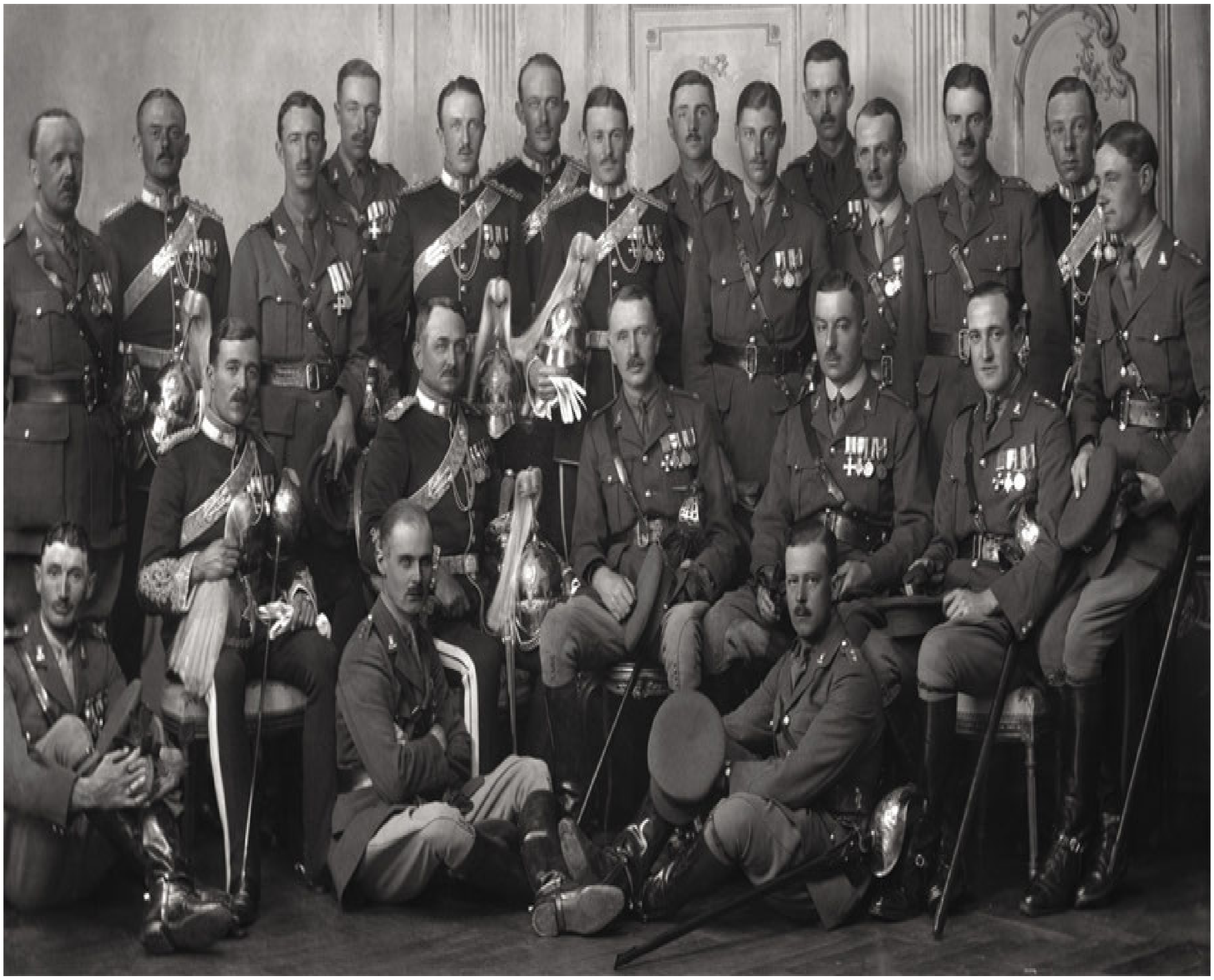


A private of the Royal Scots Greys, photographed in 1930 but depicting the Marching Order of 1918.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER SEVEN

AMALGAMATION, MECHANISATION AND WAR, 1922–1945



The last officers of 6th Dragoon Guards, photographed at the Lafayette Studio in London on 29 May 1922. These officers had that day been presented to King George V at a levee held at St James's Palace. The commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Hereward Sadler – who changed his surname to Sprot in 1931, having married the eldest daughter of Colonel Alexander Sprot in 1904 – is shown seated in Full Dress uniform, towards the centre of the group. Of the twenty-two officers in the photograph, seven retired from the army upon the regiment's amalgamation. (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

3RD CARABINIERS

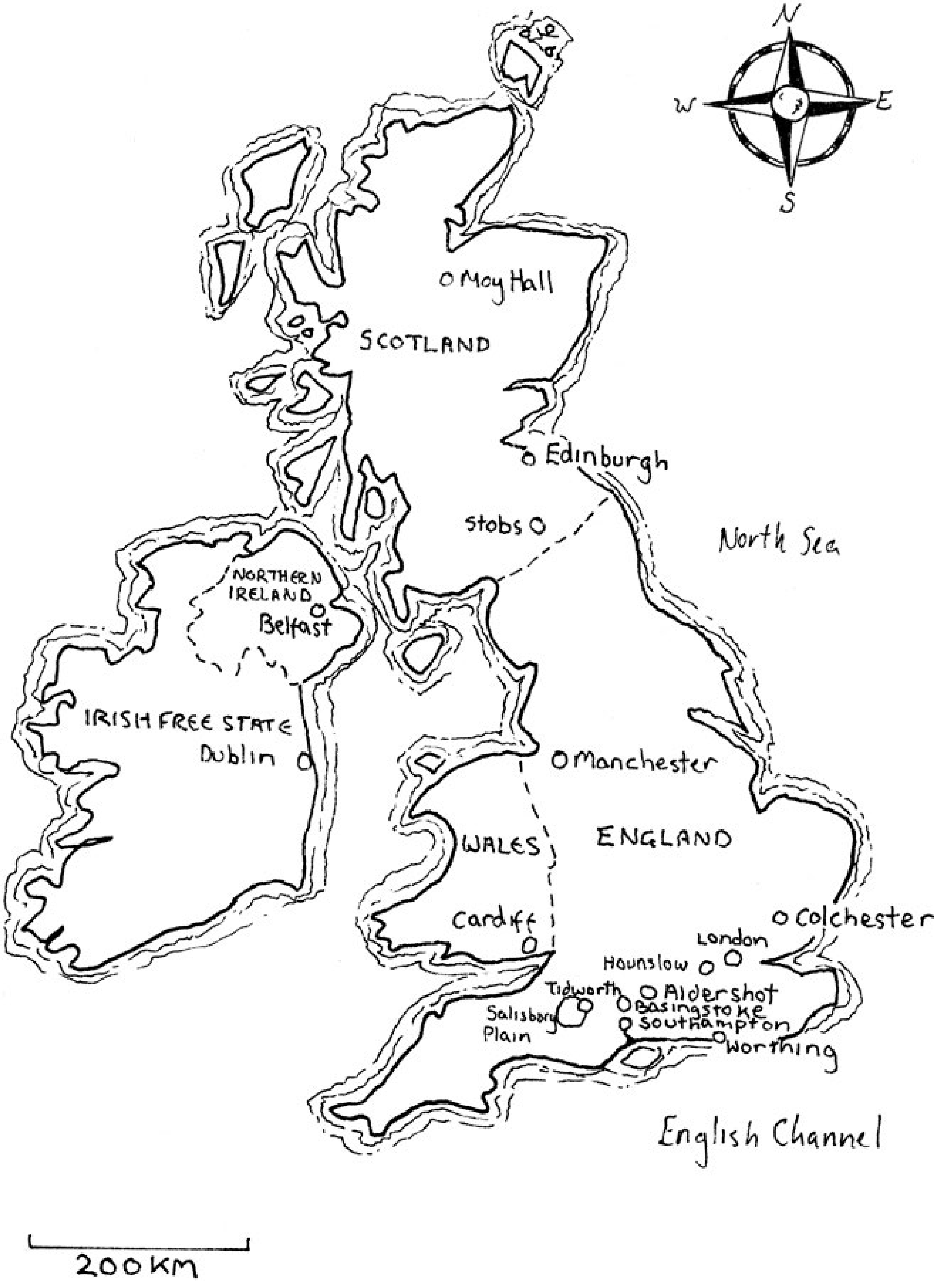
In 1922 there were precedents going back to the 17th century for the British government raising and disbanding regiments as circumstances required – usually before, during and after major wars – but no amalgamations had been applied in living memory to cavalry regiments. In 1881 the 109 regiments of line infantry had been reduced to sixty-nine by amalgamations and those amalgamations had been gradually, if grudgingly, accepted. The maintenance of separate identities between and within the separate battalions of infantry regiments had been allowed to continue after 1881 and even been encouraged in order to bolster the identities of the newly created regiments. The cavalry amalgamations of 1922 represented a considerable blow to the regiments concerned and the maintenance within the new regiments of something of the separate identities of the antecedent regiments may well have been an attempt to soften that blow. The amalgamation of the 3rd and the 6th Dragoon Guards was achieved late in 1922 by disbanding C Squadron of the 3rd Dragoon Guards and B and C Squadrons of the Carabiniers and making the single remaining squadron of Carabiniers the third squadron of the new regiment. The new regiment's title between 1922 and 1928 was '3rd/6th Dragoon Guards': no soubriquet, sub-title or honorific title, merely an equal treatment of the former titles. The final title for the new regiment, '3rd Carabiniers', was adopted in 1928.

Following amalgamation, both regiments' standards were retained, the Carabiniers one being carried by the third, or Carabiniers, squadron when on parade. It might be thought that this dual-standard practice would have lapsed when one or other wore out or was due to be replaced but this was not the case: in 1927, two new standards were presented by HRH The Prince Henry, later Duke of Gloucester, the Carabiniers one being carried on parade until 1947. The regimental magazine, when it began being published in 1936, took as its title one that reflected the most significant iconography of both original regiments: Feather and Carbine.

Another change occurred in the cavalry of the line in 1922 and remains still. Hitherto, for many years, the title of the lowest rank in the British Army had been 'private' and it had applied across all the differing arms of service. In

1922, however, cavalry privates became called ‘troopers’ – hitherto a colloquial term in the cavalry to denote a troop horse, as opposed to an officer’s ‘charger’. Similar changes were made at the same time in the regiments of Foot Guards and, gradually, in other parts of the army.

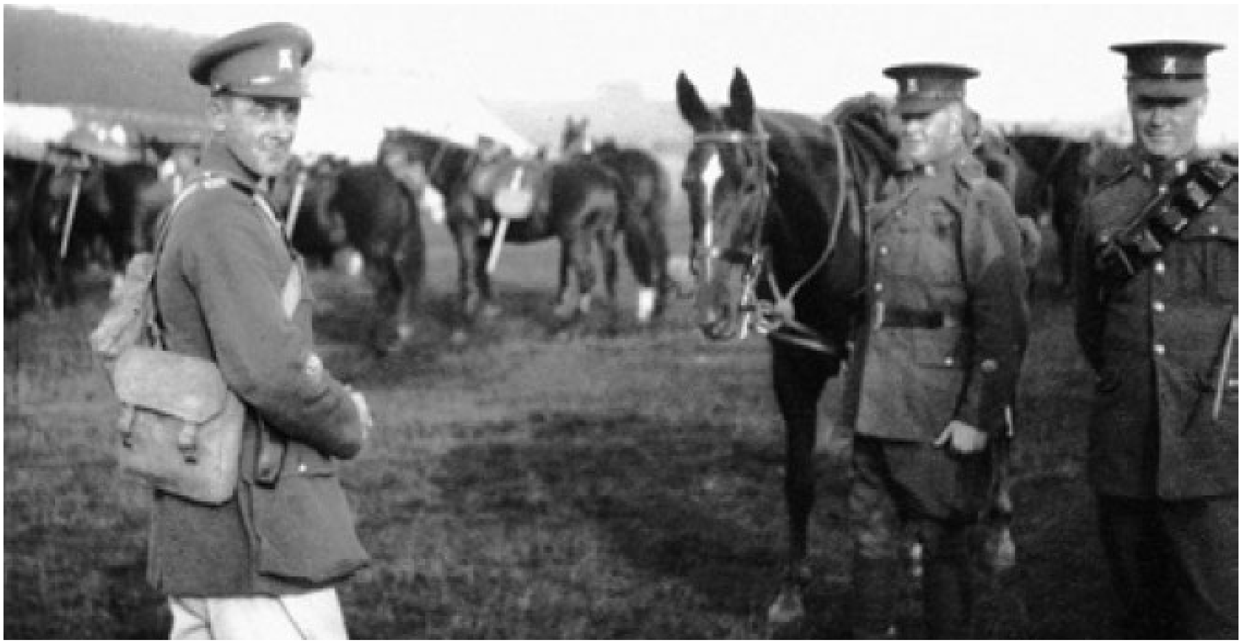
Great Britain and Ireland 1922–45


N
W
E
S
Moy Hall
SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
Stobs
North Sea
NORTHERN IRELAND
Belfast
IRISH FREE STATE
Dublin
Manchester
WALES
ENGLAND
Cardiff
Colchester
London
Hounslow
Tidworth
Aldershot
Basingstoke
Salisbury Plain
Southampton
Worthing
English Channel
200 KM

The amalgamated regiment left India in 1924 and returned home to Colchester. In 1926, during the manoeuvres of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade on Salisbury Plain, the regiment appeared fully mounted for the last time and in 1928, while stationed at Tidworth, its horse transport was replaced by a motorised equivalent. At the same time that motor vehicles took over the job of transporting the regiment’s field supplies and necessaries, its internal organisation was changed: the three sabre squadrons were reduced to two, with the third squadron being equipped and trained as a machine-gun squadron. Regimental strength was computed at the time as twenty-one officers, 458 other ranks and 277 horses. The machine-gun squadron was equipped with eight Vickers .303 water-cooled machine guns, two for each of the four troops. The mechanised transport consisted of six motorcycles, three of which had sidecars, and eleven lorries.

A detachment of 3rd/6th Dragoon Guards resting during an exercise at Marala, on the River Chenab near Sialkot, Punjab, late 1922.

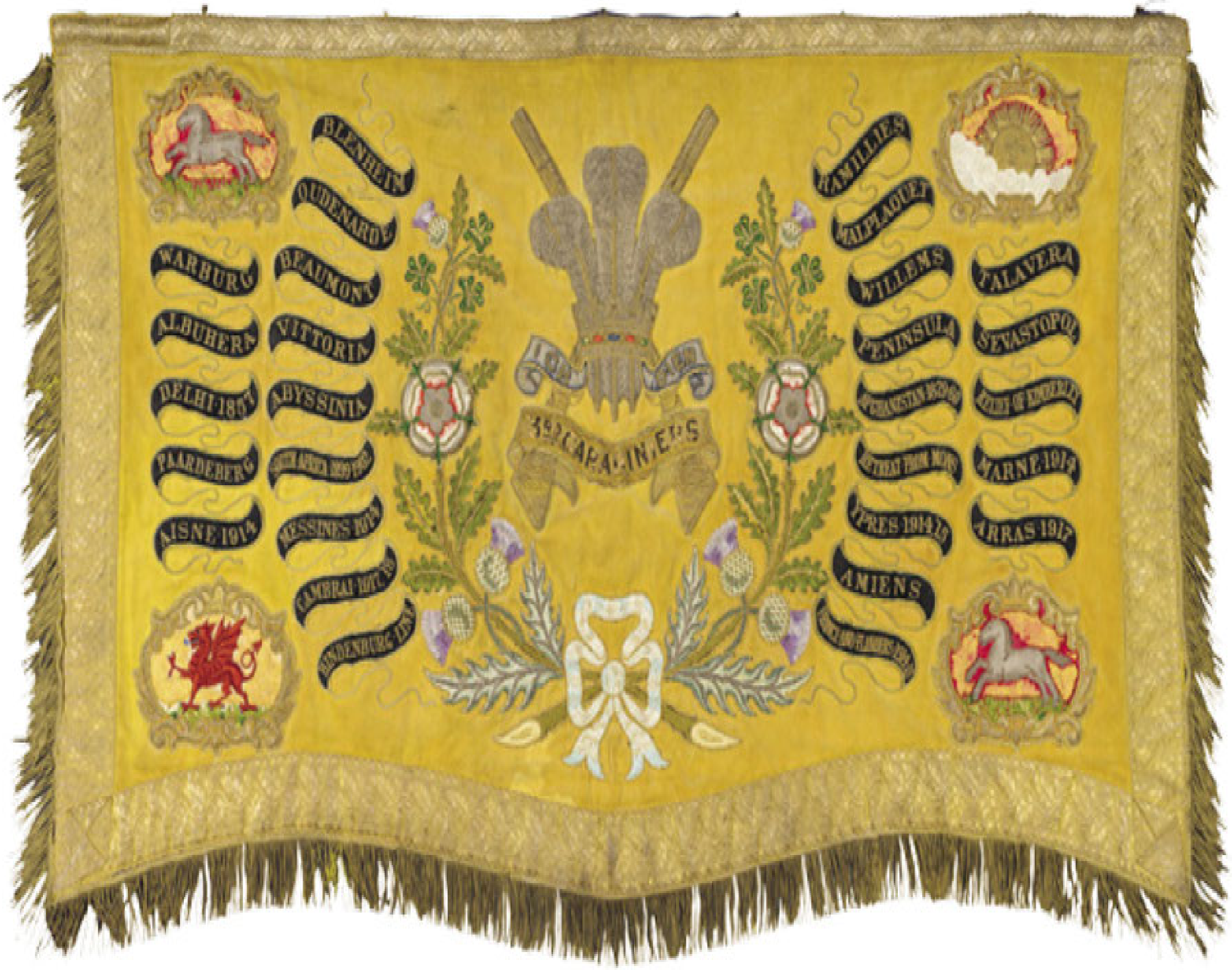
For the next decade, while operating under economies originally imposed because of the government’s Ten-Year Rule (that no war would be fought in Europe for the next ten years, to be renewed annually until 1932), most parts of the army experimented with different types of strategy and tactics that were based largely on the lessons of the First World War. That the tank was here to stay was not in question but its method of use was constantly debated and the fate of the horse remained both undecided and a contentious issue. Armoured cars were far more strategically versatile than tanks – since, like horses, they could be used in India and the Near, Middle and Far East – and concepts of extra-European warfare dominated the arguments until 1934, when the national government realised that sinister things were again afoot in Germany. During manoeuvres in England in the 1920s and early 1930s, constant comparisons were made between the relative merits of differing types of vehicle and the horse, vis-à-vis their suitability for contemporary warfare. Comparative assessments were made between their usefulness for reconnaissance, for transport of – for example – the machine-gun squadron, their speed across country and their relative degrees of economy. In some cases the vehicles won; in others, the horses did; in a few cases, no conclusions seem to have been reached. In 1927, the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert’s Own) and the 12th Lancers (Prince of Wales’s) were the first British cavalry regiments to be mechanised: both exchanged their horses for armoured cars. Not until a decade later was it decided to mechanise the remainder of the cavalry and even then the Household Cavalry, the Royal Scots Greys and the 1st (Royal) Dragoons escaped. In that intervening decade, the role of the un-mechanised cavalry continued to be a matter for debate and experiment: the 3rd Carabiniers lost half its machine-gun strength in 1930 and had its scouts and signallers transported in Austin motor cars as a third sabre squadron was resurrected. It was with this structure that the regiment sailed for India in 1936, to be quartered at the familiar station of Sialkot where – a year later – it received the news of impending mechanisation.



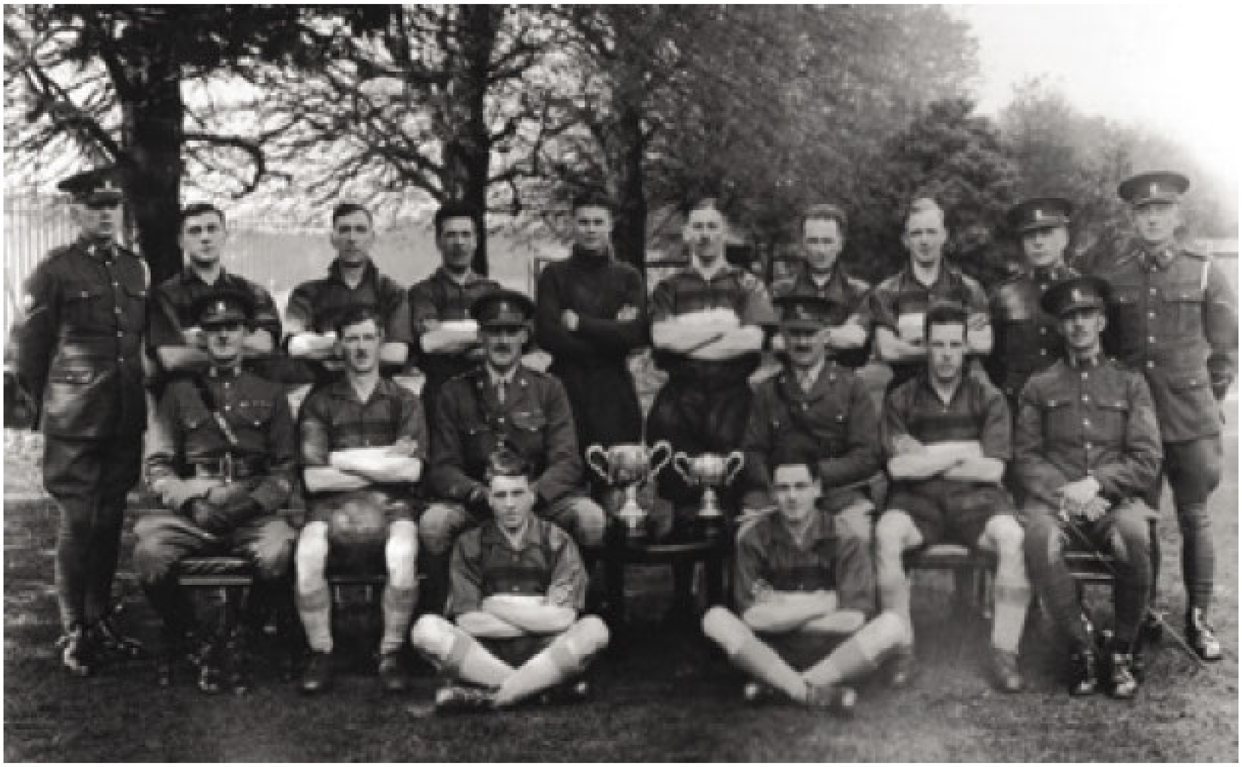
The Regimental Sergeant-Major, Mr A. W. Game (left), and Squadron Sergeant-Majors Frost and Penny, 3rd/6th Dragoon Guards, at Windmill Hill, Tidworth, c. 1927.

The presentation of the two new standards to 3rd/6th Dragoon Guards by HRH The Prince Henry, later Duke of Gloucester, at Tidworth, Thursday 21 July 1927. The Prince is shown presenting one standard; in the left foreground is the Colonel of the Regiment, Field Marshal Sir William Robertson.

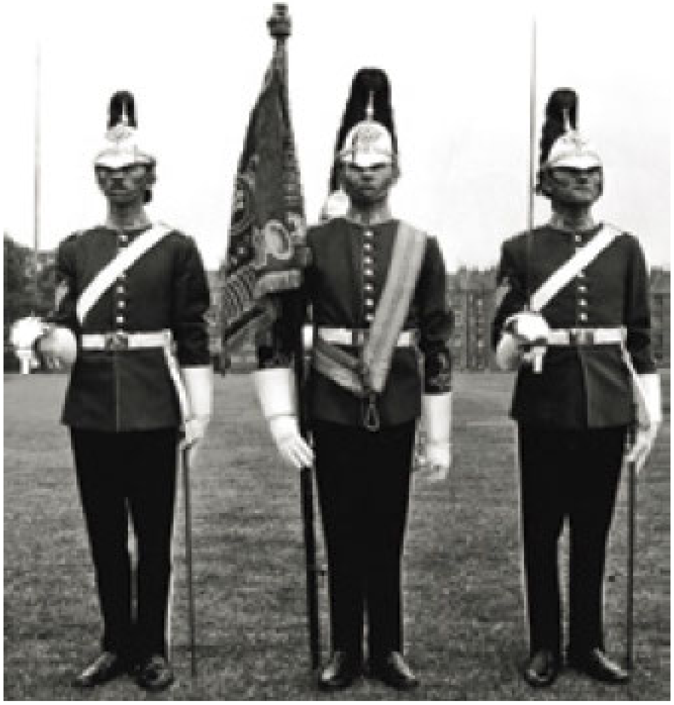
Conversion from horses to light tanks took fifteen months, from January 1938 to March 1939, and was achieved by the drafting in of instructors from the Royal Tank Corps, the successors of those who had operated the tanks on the Western Front in the First World War. The Corps had been a permanent part of the army since 1923 and had monopolised the tanks until the cavalry regiments were mechanised; it became the Royal Tank Regiment in April 1939. Six months after the 3rd Carabiniers had been declared fit to look after its own tanks, the Second World War began.


BLENHEIM
OUDENARDE
RAMILLIES
MALPLAQUET
WARBURG
BEAUMONT
WILLEMS
TALAVERA
ALBUHERA
VITTORIA
PENINSULA
SEVASTOPOL
DELHI 1857
ABYSSINIA
PAARDEBERG
RETREAT FROM MONS
MARNE 1914
AISNE 1914
MESSINES 1914
YPRES 1914-15
ARRAS 1917
CAMBRAI 1917-18
AMIENS
HINDENBURG LINE
3RD CARABINIERS

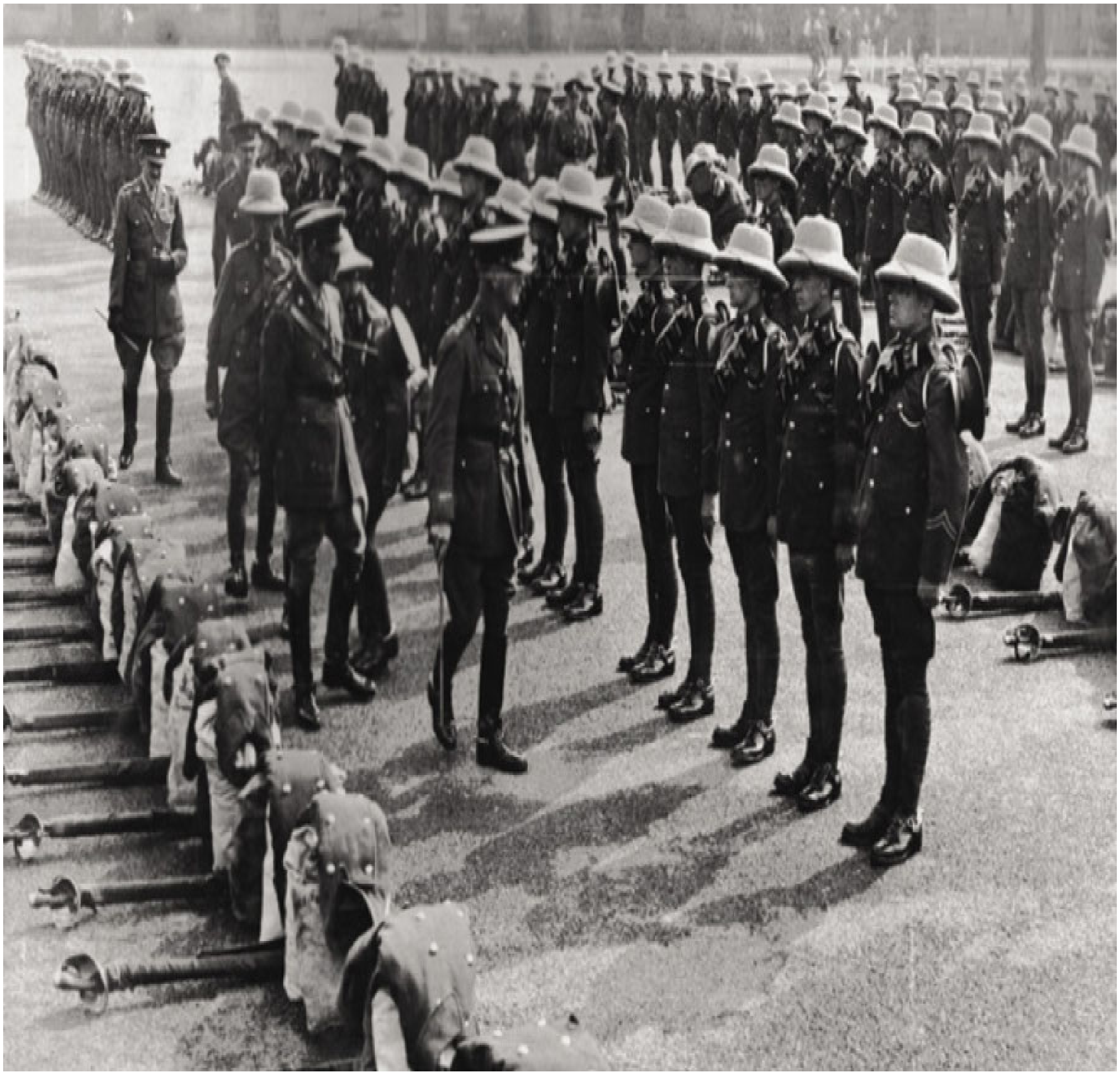
One of a pair of drum banners presented to 3rd Carabiniers at Aldershot on Saturday 27 July 1935 by Brigadier-General Oswald Smith-Bingham CMG DSO on behalf of the Old Comrades and in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the raising of 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards.



3rd Carabiniers, winners of the Cavalry Cup 1935. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel P. M. A. (Percy) Kerans MC, is seated to the left of the cups; the team captain, Sergeant Cushing, is seated between the Commanding Officer and the Regimental Sergeant-Major, with the ball between his knees.



The 3rd Dragoon Guards' standard, presented in 1927, being carried by a 3rd Carabiniers standard bearer, with escorts, on the occasion of the presentation of the drum banners, 27 July 1935.

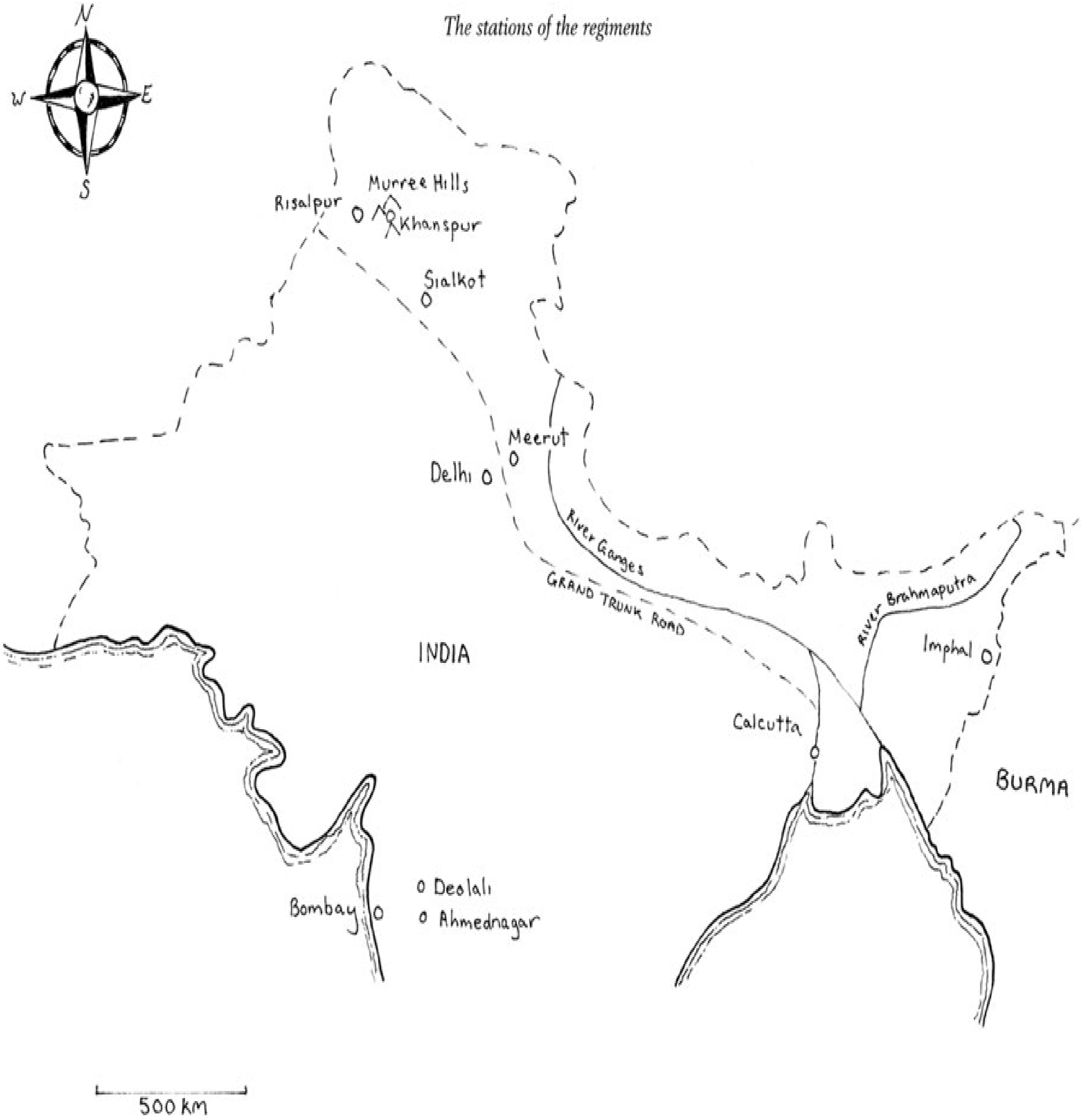


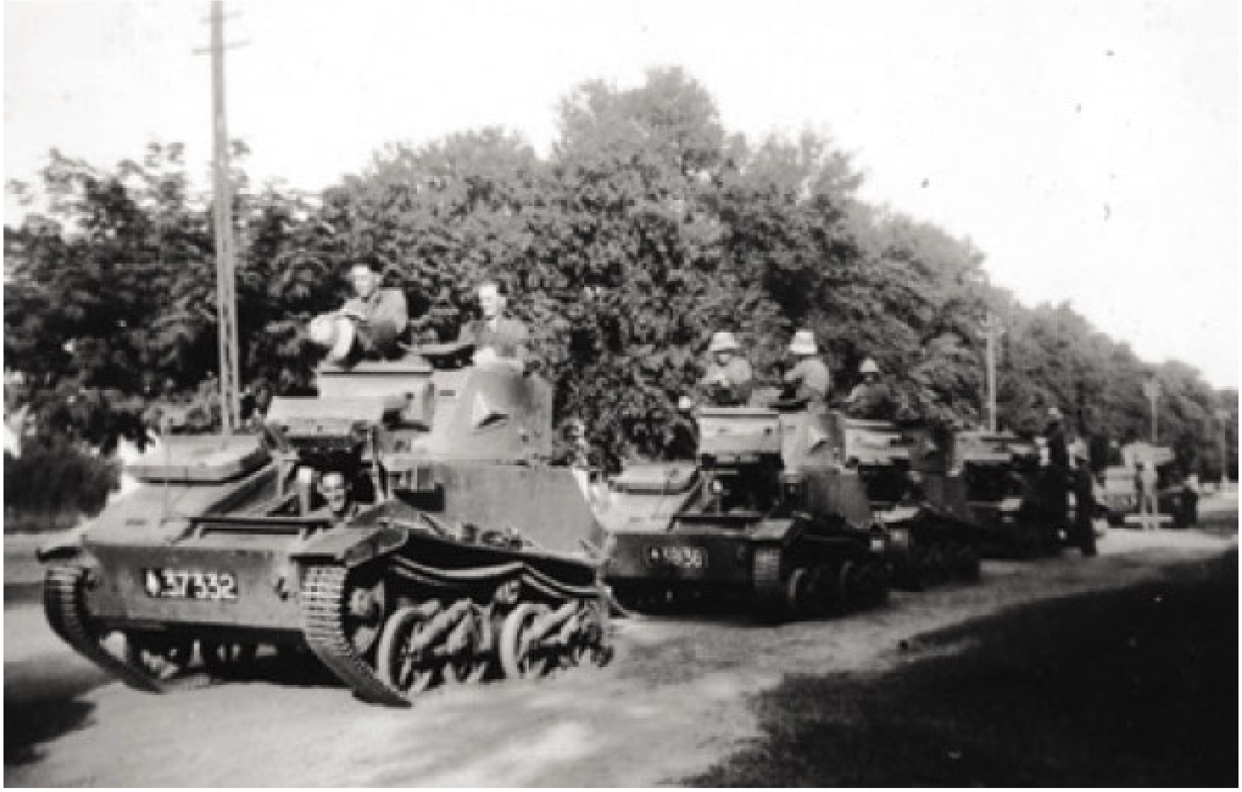
The final inspection of 3rd Carabiniers before embarking for India, Hounslow Barracks, 25 September 1936. The inspecting officer is Colonel James Jackson, Officer Commanding Troops Hounslow, and behind him is the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel L. S. (Leslie) Lloyd MC.

Although in 1939 Germany's intentions were clear and those of Italy suspect, plans that Japan might be making were far from certain. Britain had to keep a force of some strength in India to counter possible aggression from Japan and potential aggression from the Soviet Union. The Soviet-German non-aggression pact of early 1939 meant that, until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in July 1941, Britain could not be sure that the Soviet Union would not launch a second front, on behalf of the Axis powers, into northern India. The threat to India was nothing new: the ‘Great Game’ had been played between British and Russian intelligence agents and soldiers on and beyond the northern frontiers of India since the 1830s. Therefore, although quantities of Indian infantry were dispatched to North Africa, to join forces already there intended to defend Egypt and the Suez Canal from first Italian and then German aggression, the 1st Indian Armoured Division was not formed until a year after the outbreak of war. The 3rd Carabiniers were not mobilised until October 1941, two months prior to the outbreak of war with Japan.

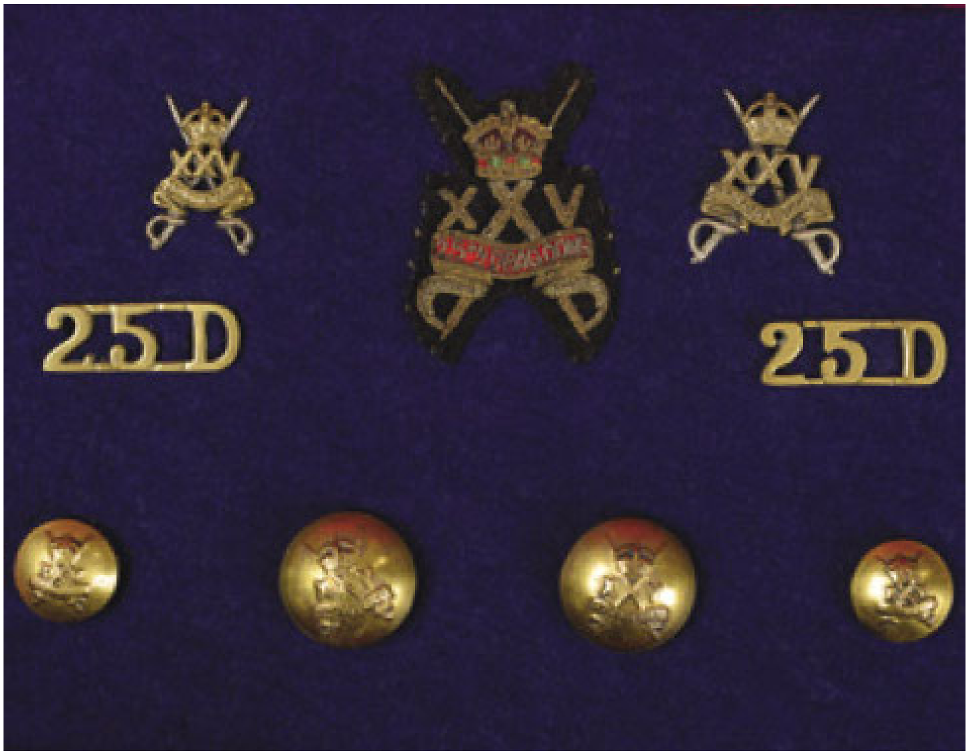
India 1922–45

The stations of the regiments


N
S
E
W
Risalpur
Murree Hills
Khanspur
Sialkot
Meerut
Delhi
River Ganges
GRAND TRUNK ROAD
River Brahmaputra
Imphal
INDIA
Calcutta
BURMA
Deolali
Bombay
Ahmednagar
500 km



A detachment of 3rd Carabiniers in the regiment’s first light tanks, Sialkot, Punjab, 1938. The tanks were Vickers-Armstrong Mk Vs which accommodated a three-man crew and mounted two machine guns – a .5-inch and a .303-inch – fitted coaxially in the turret.

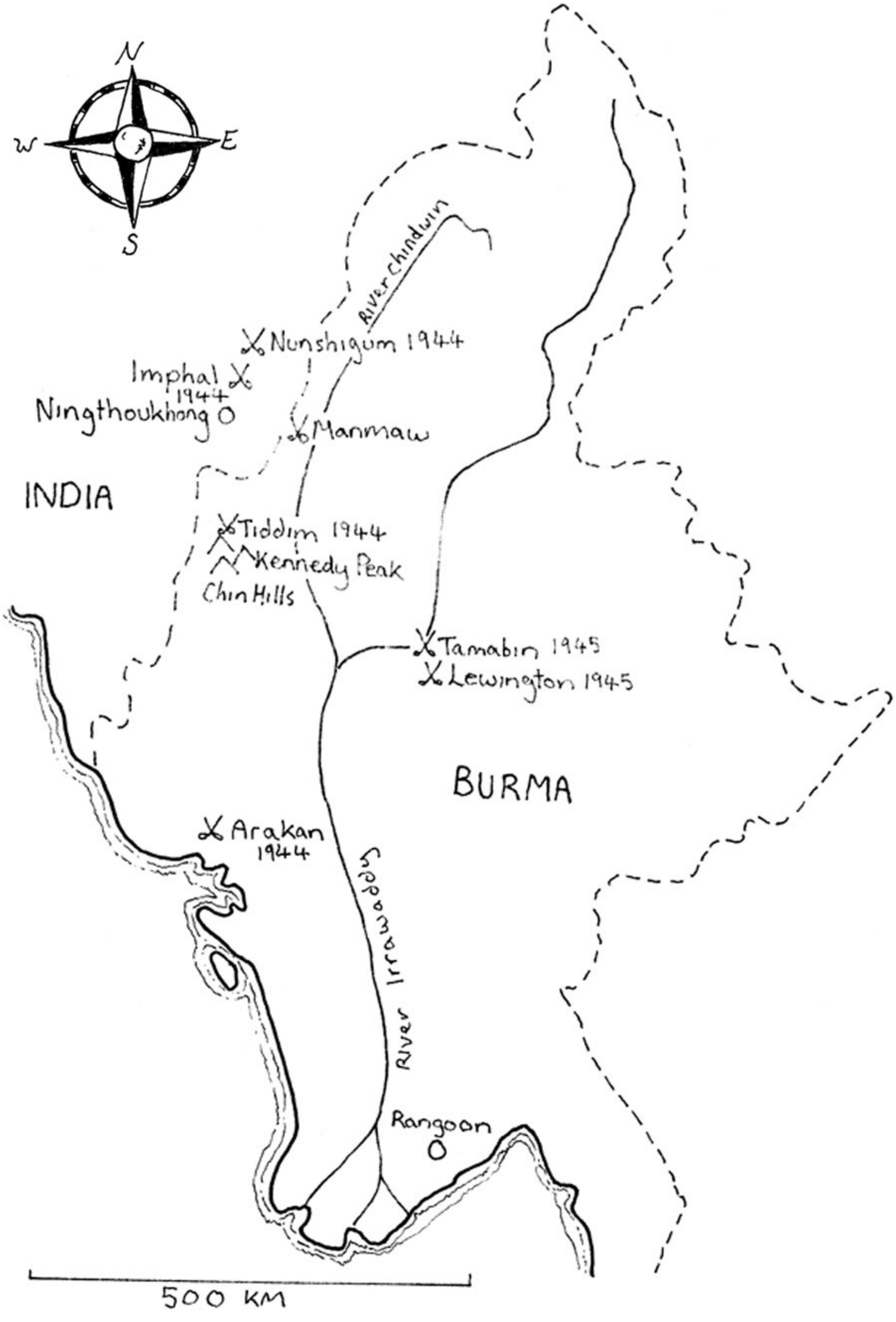


Badges and buttons worn by 25th Dragoons 1941–47.

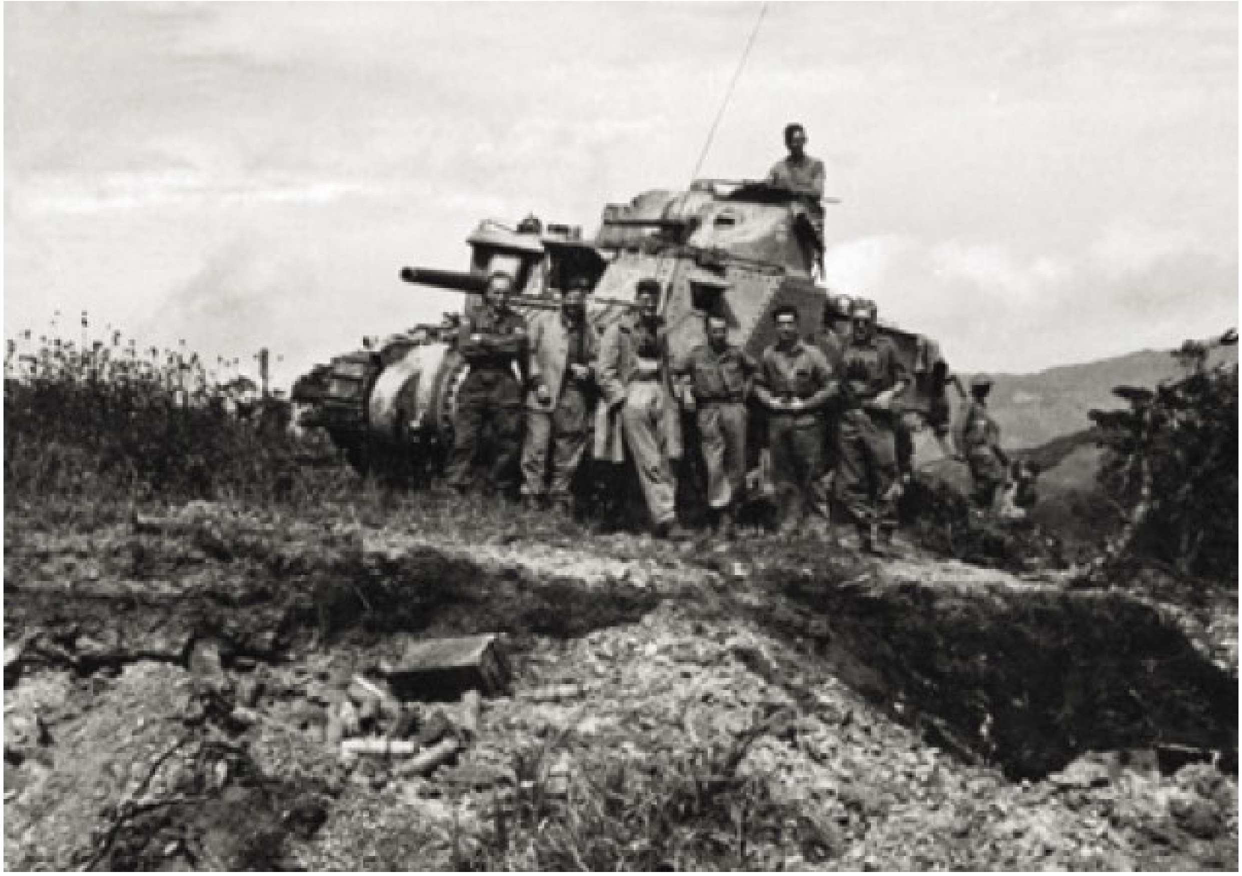
On 1 February 1941, the regiment contributed eleven of the thirteen officers and 102 other ranks to the formation of a new unit, the 25th Dragoons. The 25th's first Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer Horn MC (1895–1969), was a Carabinier who had been first commissioned into the 3rd Dragoon Guards in October 1914 before transferring to the Royal Flying Corps, becoming an ace – with thirteen enemy aircraft destroyed – and receiving the Military Cross. He subsequently relinquished command of the 25th Dragoons to return to command the 3rd Carabiniers for a time but the regiment continued forming, equipping and training until it was ready for service in Burma at the end of 1943. In early February 1944, during savage fighting in the Arakan, the 25th's Regimental Headquarters (RHQ) in the 'Delhi box' (a strategic defensive position) was surrounded by Japanese and for part of the time the divisional commander, Major General Frank Messervy CB DSO – later General Sir Frank Messervy KCSI KBE CB DSO (1893–1974) – commanded his 7th Indian Division from within the regiment's headquarters after his own command post had been overrun. After fighting throughout the Burma campaign, the 25th Dragoons were disbanded in June 1948, having earned five battle honours. Among the officers from the 3rd Carabiniers to join the 25th Dragoons was Lieutenant, later Brigadier, W. C. W. Sloan (1914–2009), who had joined the regiment in 1934. In 1944, Charles Sloan commanded A Squadron of the 25th in the Arakan, where fighting against the Japanese was fierce and intense but necessary in order to relieve pressure on Imphal, where the 3rd Carabiniers were deployed. After the Arakan, Sloan transferred to the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry to serve in France and Germany but returned to the 3rd Carabiniers after the end of the war and was the regiment's last Colonel.

In November 1941, while the 3rd Carabiniers were forming part of the 2nd Armoured Brigade of the 1st Indian Armoured Division, it received its first issue – three – of new American tanks: this marque of tank was known to the Americans as the Light Tank M3 and to the British as the 'General Stuart' or 'Stuart'; it subsequently acquired the British Army nickname 'Honey'. Each tank's main armament was a 37mm gun; it could mount between three and five .30-06 Browning machine guns; ammunition capacity was 174 rounds for the 37mm gun and 7,500 rounds for the machine guns. The Stuart accommodated a crew of four within the turret and hull, the armour of which varied in thickness from 51mm to 10mm. The tank's top speed varied between 18 and 36 miles per hour, depending on the terrain. The Stuart tanks, named after Major General J. E. B. Stuart – a Confederate cavalry general of great panache – supplemented the vehicles with which the regiment had been equipped since relinquishing its British light tanks. Such were the exigencies of war, however, that the regiment's organisation was changed from being of three squadrons of light tanks to two of medium and one of light tanks and then changed again to being of three squadrons of medium tanks.

3rd Carabiniers and 25th Dragoons in Burma 1943–45


N
W
E
S
River Chindwin
Nunshigum 1944
Imphal 1944
Ningthoukhong
Manmaw
INDIA
Tiddim 1944
Kennedy Peak
Chin Hills
Tamabin 1945
Lewington 1945
BURMA
Arakan 1944
River Irrawaddy
Rangoon
500 KM

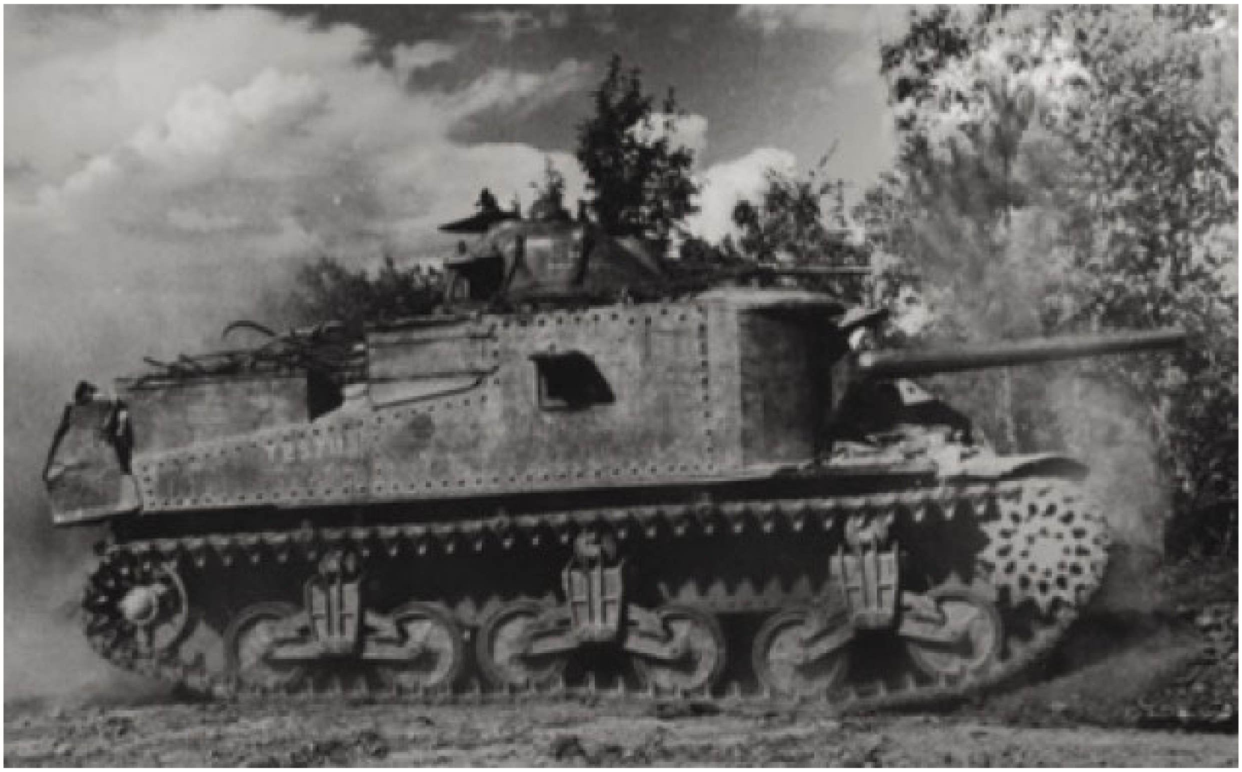
By the end of May 1942, the regiment’s armoured strength was three General Grant tanks, seven General Lee tanks and three General Stuart tanks. HQ Squadron was mounted in armoured carriers, their nicknames reflecting the degree of interest in equestrianism which remained in the regiment: the Scout troop had the names of famous hounds, the Mortar troop those of well-known racecourses and those of HQ Squadron itself were drawn straight from R. S. Surtees’s hunting novels of the 1850s, one carrier sporting the name ‘Mr Sponge’. The names ‘Grant’ and ‘Lee’ were British titles for the two marques of tank that the Americans, who made and supplied them under the Lend-Lease agreement, called the Medium Tank M3. They were named after opposing generals of the American Civil War: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. Both versions mounted two main armament guns: the 37mm gun housed in the turret was capable of traversing, as the turret traversed, through 360 degrees but the 75mm gun, which was mounted in a sponson on the right side of the hull, had its traverse restricted to 30 degrees, although it was able to elevate and depress. Acquisition of the Grant and Lee gave the British, for the first time, tanks that had superior firepower to any German tank of the period and, accommodating a crew of six, both the Grant and the Lee were comparatively roomy inside. The advantage of the 75mm sponson-mounted gun was that it could fire both armour-piercing and high-explosive ammunition, for which purpose forty-six rounds were carried; this capability was not afforded by the 37mm turret-mounted gun, which could draw upon a storage capacity of 178 rounds. Light armament comprised two to four Browning .30-06 machine guns, with storage for 9,200 rounds. The essential differences between the marques were that the Grant had a turret which overhung at the rear, in which the wireless equipment was housed, and did not have an armoured cupola mounting a .30-06 Browning machine gun on its turret; the earlier versions of the Lee had riveted, not cast, hulls but this ill-advised idea was dropped on later versions.



Captain (temporary Major) I. E. (Ian) Morgan and Lieutenant C. W. (Charles) Bell with the crew of M3 Lee tank 25711 of 4 Troop, C Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers on Kennedy Peak, 6 October 1944, following the capture of Tiddim and during the pursuit of the Japanese south towards Rangoon. Lieutenant Bell was the tank commander and Trooper M. L. Connolly its driver. At 8,868 feet, Kennedy Peak is the highest in the Chin Hills and getting tanks to it was believed to have been a world record at that time.

The arrival of its small quantity of tanks suggested to the regiment the likelihood of imminent active service but the tanks did not remain long with the 3rd Carabiniers before being sent to the Middle East in June and July 1942 where, it was felt, they could be put to better use. Defeat of Germany's Panzerarmee Afrika in the Western Desert seemed likely whereas that of Japan in Burma seemed rather far away and it was a case of utilising limited resources where they could do most good. The 3rd Carabiniers were left without any tanks at all and the regiment appears for a time to have been rather at a loss regarding what role it was intended to play in the war.

In September 1942 Major Ralph Younger MC became Second-in-Command, joining from the 7th Hussars, with which regiment he had received the Military Cross in 1941; he subsequently commanded the 3rd Carabiniers during 1943 and 1944. Younger was in command during the fiercest of the fighting in Burma and during the battle at Nunshigum; he was awarded the DSO in 1945 in recognition of his service in command of the regiment in Burma and was to become the first Colonel of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys).



An M3 Lee medium tank of C Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers on the Tiddim Road, Burma, 1944, following the battle of Imphal. This side view shows the sponson-mounted 75mm gun on the tank's offside, as well as the 37mm turret-mounted gun.

By February 1943 some more Grant and Lee tanks had arrived, as had more Stuarts, but by July only the Stuarts were left; shortly afterwards these too were withdrawn and Lees were substituted. By that time, as the regimental historian Lewis Oatts has wryly observed, the regiment could drive just about anything. During the previous year, the regiment's brigade had been renumbered 251st Indian Armoured Brigade within the renumbered 31st Indian Armoured Division but in October 1943 that brigade was disbanded and the regiment made an independent unit that incorporated a workshop section, an ordnance field park section, a light aid detachment and a tank recovery unit. Prospects of active service increased and, following removal of the ordnance field park section, the regiment moved in December 1943 to Imphal, in north-east India, close to the Burmese frontier, and prepared itself for the invasion of Burma. Moving the tanks involved first loading them onto open railway wagons, with the tanks covered in tarpaulins to disguise them, then onto barges that were towed up the Brahmaputra River, then again onto railway wagons and finally onto tank transporters so that they could be moved by road. On arrival at Imphal, the regiment formed part of 254th Indian Tank Brigade.

Burma was not regarded as ideal tank country: there were no wide, dry plains where armoured units could forge across uninterrupted miles of terrain. The Burma campaign was not one characterised by swift movements carried out by conventional forces, although the unconventional Japanese had succeeded in scything through Burma fairly rapidly, and retaking Burma was – it was recognised – going to be an arduous business. Tanks were expected to be used in the close support role to infantry, as mobile fire platforms and as a means of transporting foot soldiers. To learn this role, the regiment began training with 1st Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders.

The Japanese were aware of British intentions at Imphal and moved forward from Burma to oppose them and attempt to invade India. Both sides engaged in a series of almost hesitant reconnaissance patrols, in varying degrees of strength, and not until 20 March 1944 were the 3rd Carabiniers committed by one of those to serious activity. In a short and heated action on that date and following an ambush at Manmaw, 5 miles south of Tamu, two troops of the regiment – commanded by Major Edward Pettit, attached from the 9th

Lancers – destroyed four Japanese tanks, probably damaged two more and captured a seventh, which was eventually put back into working order and sent as a present to the commander of the 14th Army, General Sir William Slim. Only one of Pettit's tanks was seriously hit and his squadron sustained six casualties in the course of the brief action; Pettit was awarded the Military Cross for his gallantry but was killed in action in August 1944 before the award could be made.

The Japanese forces attacked in strength later in March 1944 and attempted to encircle the 17th Indian Division at Imphal. British forces there, including the 3rd Carabiniers, withdrew into a series of defensive 'boxes'. The regiment was largely divided by squadron and troop, both at Imphal and elsewhere, and consequently separated between defensive boxes and training areas. The whole of IV Corps, of which the division formed a part, was soon surrounded but Allied air superiority meant not only that it could be supported from the air but also that it could be reinforced by the same means. This was an advantage denied to the Japanese, whose lines of communication and supply were both dangerously extended and increasingly weakened. At the end of April 1944, British forces broke out of their defensive positions and began to counterattack. The regiment's A Squadron was soon in action at Ningthoukhong, in support of 1st Battalion 4th Gurkha Rifles, but sustained severe casualties and losses in the process and had to withdraw; the position was finally taken by tanks and Gurkhas at the end of the month.

The medals of Squadron Sergeant-Major, later Regimental Sergeant-Major, William Craddock DCM; his Distinguished Conduct Medal was awarded in recognition of his bravery at Nunshigum, 13 April 1944.

Earlier in April 1944, B Squadron had been in action in support of the 3rd Battalion 9th Jat Regiment in assaulting a position at Nunshigum, north of Imphal. The Nunshigum Ridge was a precipitous one and the Japanese so well entrenched that an attack on 11 April had to be abandoned. Because of the impervious nature of the Japanese bunkers to both air attack and long-range artillery fire, it was decided that, for the renewed attack, the infantry – 1st Dogras – would have to be closely supported by the 3rd Carabiniers' tanks. This meant taking tanks up extremely steep inclines and through terrain which would severely reduce their speed and mobility and, in consequence, make them very vulnerable. The attack began on 13 April. The first summit was reached quickly enough but then the tanks had to proceed in single file, flanked by the infantry, at a very slow pace. The tanks' commanders had to lean out through their turret hatches to see what was happening, to direct their drivers – who could not see ahead through their apertures because of the angle of ascent – and to be able to communicate quickly with the infantry. The angle of ascent also meant that the tanks' main armament was largely useless, being unable to depress sufficiently, so the tank commanders had to resort to their pistols and to grenades. Once the supporting air and artillery barrage lifted, the Japanese attacked the tanks on foot, eventually killing or mortally wounding all the officers commanding the tanks. Forward movement largely ceased as, one by one, the tanks' crews were put out of action by accurate Japanese shooting and suicidal attacks. Displaying commendable initiative and courage and acting on Colonel Younger's orders – which were still coming through on the tanks' wireless sets – Squadron Sergeant-Major William Craddock, the remaining unwounded tank commander, in alliance with Subedar Ranbir Singh, senior surviving officer of the Dogras, coordinated an outflanking movement of the Japanese positions and, by drawing and returning their fire with the few tanks left operational – if only by their drivers – distracted them in order that the Dogras could advance and capture their positions. Two hundred and seventy Japanese dead were counted at the end of an hour's fierce fighting. Squadron Sergeant-Major Craddock was subsequently awarded the

Distinguished Conduct Medal and Sergeant Sydney Hannan and Trooper Frederick Smith received Military Medals; Ranbir Singh of the Dogras was awarded the Indian Order of Merit. ‘Nunshigum’ was awarded to the 3rd Carabiniers as a battle honour and on the regiment’s Nunshigum Day B Squadron always leads the parade, without its officers, and is commanded by the squadron sergeant-major, in commemoration of the death of all the officers of the squadron at Nunshigum and of the bravery of Squadron Sergeant-Major, later Regimental Sergeant-Major, W. J. E. Craddock DCM (1908–49), an exemplary cavalry warrant officer.

Other ranks’ Full Dress uniform had been withdrawn in 1914, and was not reissued, except for bands, after the war. Officers were no longer required to own Full Dress, and wore it only for levees and similar occasions when not on parade with troops. Frock coats were abolished for regimental officers, and the only official uniforms, apart from Service Dress, were Mess Dress and the blue frock, now once again fitted with an upright collar, which was worn by the orderly officer in the evening and by all officers as Mess Dress when in camp.

When the 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards were first amalgamated in 1922, A and B Squadrons wore the uniform and badges of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, while C Squadron personnel were dressed as Carabiniers, although the entire regiment wore the same shoulder title. Officers who needed Full Dress for an appearance at a levee simply wore the uniform of their original regiment.

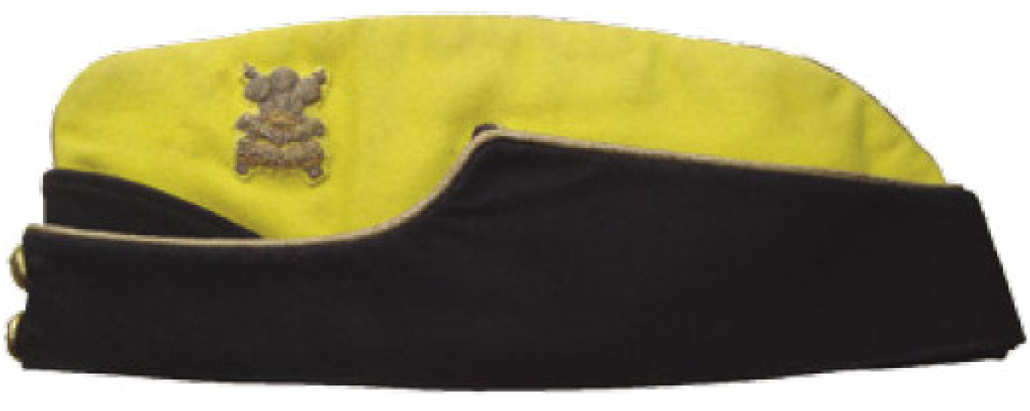
In 1928, when it was clear that the two regiments would never again be separated, an amalgamated cap badge and Full Dress uniform were devised. The latter was effectively that of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, with the addition of the new buttons and collar-badges, silver pickers and

chains to officers' shoulder-belts, and with the Carabiniers' double white stripe on the overalls. Mess Dress for officers consisted of the 3rd Dragoon Guards' scarlet jacket with yellow velvet collar and cuffs, combined with the Carabiniers' white cloth waistcoat and overalls with double white stripes. 3rd Carabinier officers had the option of wearing a blue and yellow side-hat with informal orders of dress. In Service Dress, the officers wore a pigskin Sam Browne with a brass spring-clip to attach the brace to the belt. Their badges of rank were gilt and enamel, while those of the Greys were drab worsted.

The beginning of the Second World War saw the replacement of Service Dress by serge battledress, although this was delayed for both the Greys, then still a mounted regiment serving in Palestine, and the 3rd Carabiniers, who were stationed in India. After the introduction of battledress, officers retained Service Dress but wore it for formal occasions only, while Mess Dress ceased to be worn.

In the late 1940s, officers of the Greys adopted the distinctive grey beret for wear in the tank park and in the field. Its use was progressively extended to warrant officers, staff sergeants, sergeants, and by the end of the 1950s to all ranks. It became a jealously guarded feature of their uniform for the next twenty years.

Charles Webb



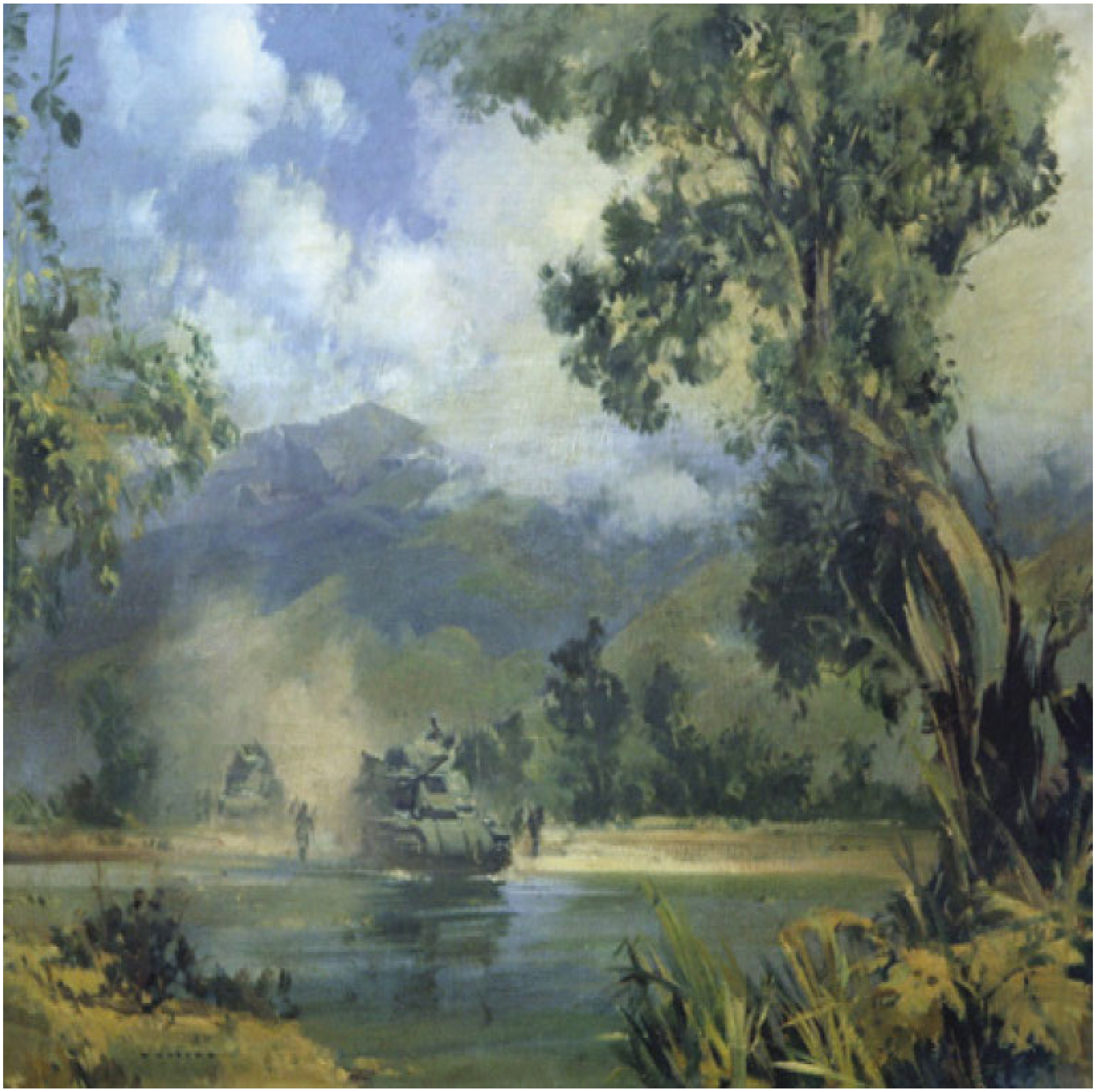
Officer's side-cap, 3rd Carabiniers.

The tanks of C Squadron were engaged on a number of occasions during the rest of the battle of Imphal, principally in support of infantry under the most dangerous and trying conditions. After leave, and action in the Chin Hills, the regiment was ready to participate in the full assault into Burma at the beginning of November 1944. In December the Chindwin River was crossed, with the tanks driven onto rafts and floated across, and B Squadron operated with a company of the Royal Berkshire Regiment in dense jungle, sustaining several casualties among their senior officers from Japanese snipers. As the British advanced south, so the Japanese withdrew before them, rarely contesting much ground, and the speed of the advance increased. B Squadron continued to pursue the enemy, moving without the aid of tank transporters – so difficult was the terrain – and the Irrawaddy River was reached and crossed at the end of February 1945. The various squadrons of the Carabiniers were placed in support of different infantry columns and, again, operated largely separately.

On 2 March 1945, A Squadron was operating in a wide sweep, attacking the Burmese settlements of Tamabin and Lewington but encountering stiff resistance from massed bodies of the enemy. In one bloody engagement, Captain Hubert Cornaby’s tank was attacked on foot by a Japanese artillery officer and a private; the private was killed by fire from a neighbouring tank but Cornaby was killed by the Japanese officer with his sword. Entering Cornaby’s tank, the Japanese officer then killed the gunner of the 37mm turret gun in the same way and attacked the gun’s loader, Trooper Vernon Jenkins from Blaengarw in Glamorgan. Jenkins had to fire all six rounds from his revolver into him and then three more from the gunner’s revolver before the Japanese officer was dead; Jenkins was awarded the Military Medal and presented with the Japanese officer’s sword, which is now in the regimental museum.

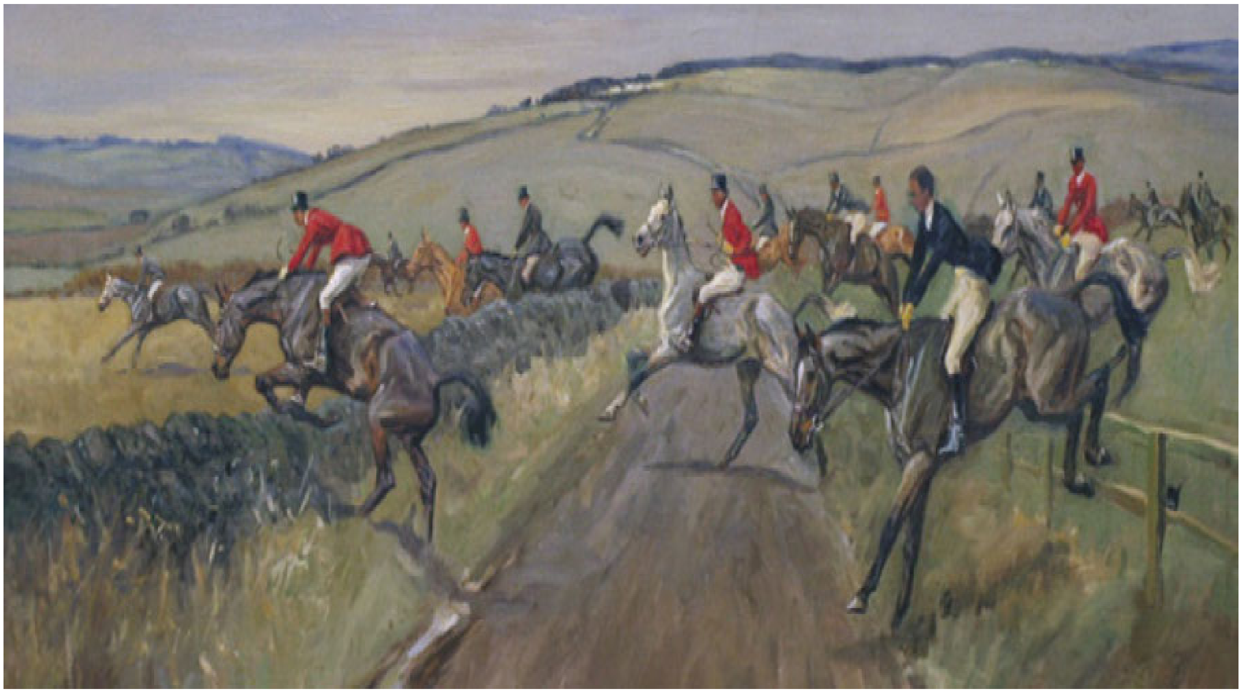
The Japanese officer's sword with which Captain Hubert Cornaby, A Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers, was killed, along with his turret gunner, on 2 March 1945. The Japanese officer was killed by the tank's loader, Trooper Vernon Jenkins, who was awarded the Military Medal and presented with this sword.

The regiment reached Rangoon on 28 May after several bloody engagements. After stripping and disabling its tanks, which were left in Rangoon, the 3rd Carabiniers sailed for India on 18 June 1945, moving to Ahmednagar shortly after arrival. Casualties during the fourteen months between March 1944 and May 1945 were 82 of all ranks killed and 147 of all ranks wounded. From Ahmednagar, the regiment's next destination was Risalpur on the North-West Frontier and it was re-equipped with Sherman Mk III tanks for the possibility of a campaign in that area; after numerous delays, the regiment concentrated in Risalpur by Christmas 1945.



M3 Lee medium tanks of 3rd Carabiniers crossing a Burmese chaung (stream), 1945; oil on canvas by Frank Wootton. The painting was presented to the regiment in memory of Brigadier F. J. S. Whetstone OBE, who commanded it 1944–46 and 1948–50.

The horse has been fundamental to regimental life and horse racing has therefore formed a natural part of regimental history in the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 6th Dragoon Guards and the Greys. No doubt there were wagers of ‘my horse is faster than yours’ from the beginning, but the earliest record is for the Greys Subalterns’ Cup in 1870. Thereafter, records of the Greys and SCOTS DG can be found in the Regimental Racing Record Book presented by Lieutenant-Colonel F. G. Farquhar, starting in 1886 and held in the Officers’ Mess. Its records show a variety of events, from cross-country races, through amateur point-to-points to chasing under rules of the Jockey Club, now the British Horseracing Authority. Most races have been between officers, although there have been contests between other ranks and there is even one record of an inter-squadron race in 1920. The eligibility of horses has varied between officers’ chargers, military horses, hunters and racehorses owned within the regimental family. Two trophies have featured throughout: one for subaltern jockeys and one for grey horses only. The Subalterns’ Cup became the property of Mr C. W. Neale in 1876 under the original rules, he having won it twice riding a grey gelding called Robin Gray. It was replaced by a similar cup, in the form of a silver biscuit box, which is still in use in the Officers’ Mess. The Grey Horse Trophy was presented by Lieutenant-Colonel A. D. Miller in 1909.



The Sprot Cup 1971; oil on canvas by Tom Carr.

Many locations have featured regimental races. The earlier records in the late 19th century included races at Aldershot and the hunt countries of the Southwold near Brighton, and the Vale of the White Horse near Cirencester. With the regiment moving between England, Ireland and Scotland, many other places feature, including Dundalk, Dublin, Linlithgow and Stirling, Bogside in Ayrshire, the Scottish Borders and, since the Second World War, the Beaufort, Buccleuch, Berwickshire, Zetland and Bedale/West of Yore hunt countries. Since the war, races have traditionally been cross-country without weight restrictions and with riders dressed in traditional hunting attire, although more recently crash hats have replaced top hats. Of these races, the Sprot Cup prevails and is traditionally run when the regiment is based at home. The trophy, presented by Lieutenant Mark Sprot in 1906, features a beautiful silver heron based on the family crest. The Subalterns' Cup and the Grey Horse Trophy were eventually incorporated in this race.

Since 1971 the regiment has sponsored a public race under rules. First in Lanark, then Hamilton, Ayr and now Kelso, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Hunters' Chase remains a sound prospect annually, featuring a good regimental gathering including families. Wider racing under rules has attracted many to ride under their own name and colours, and the regiment is registered in its own right for National Hunt purposes with colours of dark blue with yellow diamonds, sleeve hoops and cap. These colours are available for a regimentally owned or leased horse, or for a syndicate using the regimental title. The principal meeting is the Grand Military at Sandown, run in March each year. The regiment has had winners in some but not all of the races open to military jockeys. Most notably, Captain Sebastian Nicholl won the Hunter Chase in 1998, 1999 and 2000. So far the main race of the meeting, the Grand Military Gold Cup, has eluded the regiment, though there have been two close seconds. Captain Hamish Lochore, riding his own Napoleon Brandy in 1971, was beaten by a short head by Lieutenant-Colonel Piers Bengough (10th Hussars), and Major Felix Wheeler on Jultara in 1997 was also beaten by a short head by Captain John Ogden (Life Guards). In 2014 Major Wheeler held the record for the most prolific military jockey of any regiment at that meeting, with that year's being his seventeenth ride (and with no plans to hang up his boots). Living up to the regiment's motto, the Grand Military challenge is one which must be pursued.

Charles Ramsay

Major Felix Wheeler and Captain Will Ramsay battle it out in the 1995 Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown.

The silver trophy presented by Lieutenant Mark Sprot in 1906.

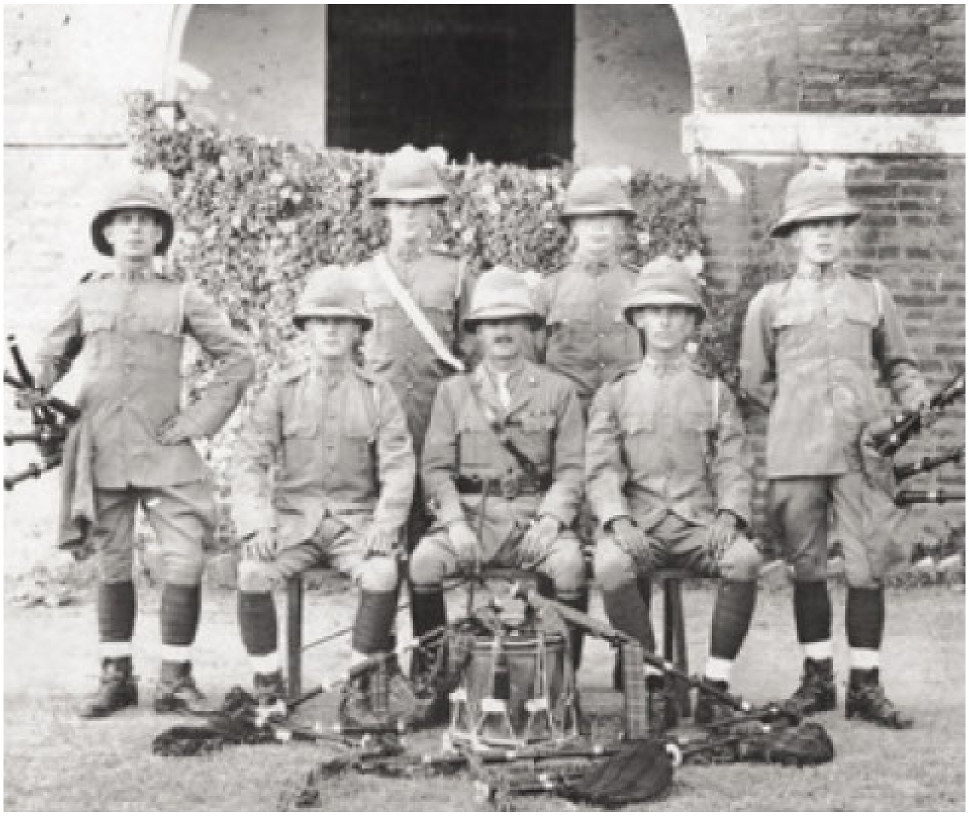
ROYAL SCOTS GREYS

The Greys left Palestine in May 1922 and returned to Egypt but at the beginning of October that year they left Suez for India, arriving in Bombay on 17 October for the regiment's first period of service in the subcontinent. After a brief period in camp at Deolali the regiment

moved to Risalpur, where it relieved the very recently amalgamated 13th/18th Hussars.

The Greys remained in Risalpur until 1925, getting back up to strength, training for the possibilities of service on the frontier and enjoying the benefits of service in India – which included the field sports of hunting, shooting and fishing as well as polo. Participation in horse shows increased and was encouraged: Squadron Sergeant-Major James C. Frier won cups at two shows in 1924. Hockey became a regimental game, played during the summer months in the hill station of Khanspur in the Murree Hills. In 1925 the regiment moved to Meerut to relieve the 11th Hussars, marching 610 miles south-east along the Grand Trunk Road, taking two months and doing the journey in forty-eight stages. While in Meerut in 1925, the regiment took part in several horse shows where the musical ride, a demonstration of equestrian skill accompanied by music, was much in demand and where Squadron Sergeant-Major Frier repeated his triumph at Risalpur. It also brought up its polo team to become one of the best in the army, won a couple of steeplechases and took part in pig-sticking competitions. In 1926 the regimental boxing team won the All-India Cavalry Boxing Cup for the third time but in 1927 this period in India was brought to a close by a return home.

The regiment left India on 28 October 1927 and disembarked at Southampton on 18 November, arriving at Redford Barracks, south of Edinburgh, on the following day. The grey horses which the Greys had so reluctantly left in Edinburgh in 1920 were returned and were to be of considerable use in carrying out the regiment's public duties for the next decade. One of the first of those duties was to accompany and guard the coffin of Field Marshal Earl Haig, who died in 1928; his son George (1918–2009), known in the regiment as Dawyck – after the secondary title of the earldom granted to his father in 1919 – was to serve as an officer in the regiment from 1938 to 1951. After a social and recreational round throughout 1928 and much of 1929, with summer training at the annual month's camp at Stobs, near Hawick in the Scottish Borders, the Greys moved to Tidworth in Hampshire in November 1929.

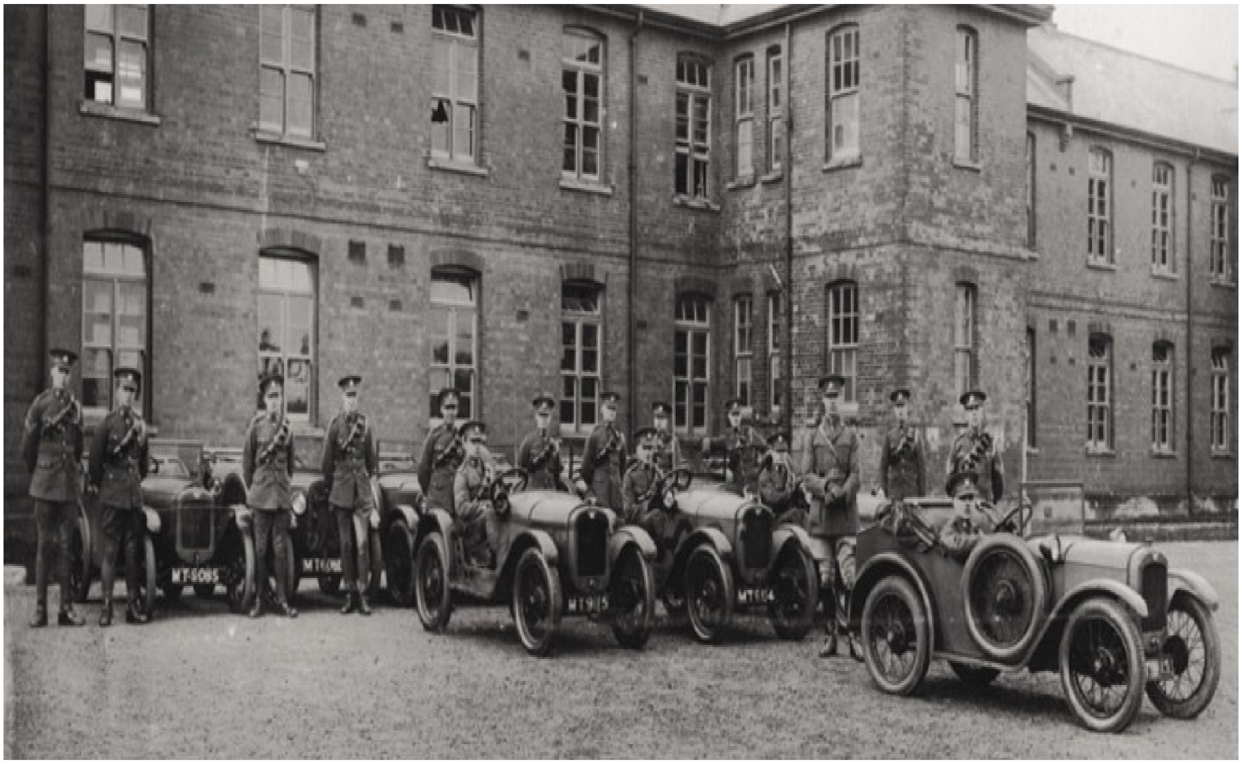


The Pipe Band, the Royal Scots Greys, Meerut, India, 1927, with the Regimental Sergeant-Major, Mr Close; consisting of five pipers in this photograph (Sergeant Audis, Lance-Corporal McPherson and Troopers Bovill, Urquhart and Ward), together with one drummer (Trooper Kelly). The Pipe Band represented the beginnings of the regiment's subsequently famous Pipes and Drums.

The Greys remained at Mooltan Barracks in Tidworth garrison for the next four years, largely unaffected by murmurings about mechanisation, although concessions were made through the acquisition of a number of Austin 7 motor cars to form a mechanised signal troop. Tattoos, horse shows, polo tournaments, race meetings and other sports and games seem to have occupied much of the regiment's time but some time was also spent at annual camp. The Greys had, by the early 1930s, developed a deserved reputation for the strength of its polo team and won the Subalterns' Cup in 1931, 1932 and 1934, aided greatly by the presence in the regiment of

Humphrey Guinness (1902–86); Guinness served in the Greys 1923–48 and played for the national polo team and in the British polo team at the 1936 Olympic Games. In 1933 the regiment returned to Edinburgh.

The regimental hockey team, the Royal Scots Greys, Risalpur, India, 1924. Back row (left to right): Troopers Taylor and Meekin, Sergeant McMasters; centre row: Lance Corporal Jenkins, Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant Wainwright, Second Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Colonel Sir) Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, Trooper Quaife, Lance Corporal Neale; front row: Trooper Tate, Corporal Hollick, Troopers Jerry and Winter.



The Mechanised Signal Troop, the Royal Scots Greys, Mooltan Barracks, Tidworth, 1930. The motor cars are modified, two-seater Austin 7 ‘tourers’.

It had become the practice to spend June and July each year at camp and under canvas in order to teach recruits about – and remind old sweats of – active service conditions. However, in 1934 the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier) George Pigot-Moodie MC – who commanded the regiment 1932–36, decided that it was time that the regiment made its presence known through Scotland to those Scots who might have believed that all Scottish regiments comprised foot soldiers. The regiment had recruited solely from Scotland for some time but was in competition for recruits with the Lowland and Highland infantry regiments, which had specific recruiting areas of the country allocated to them. Lieutenant-Colonel Pigot-Moodie managed to persuade the army's authorities to allow him to take a mounted party of the regiment on a tour of Scotland to 'show the flag' in a way that would now be called a KAPE – Keeping the Army in the Public Eye – tour. The march, from 16 July to 7 August 1934, took twenty-three days, covered 470 miles and involved twenty-one officers and 250 men, 200 grey horses and the regiment's supporting motor transport. Hospitality abounded all the way and what would now be called the 'publicity value' of the march was considerable, despite the generally poor weather. The march is commemorated by an inscribed granite stone at Moy Hall – ancestral seat of the Mackintosh of Mackintosh, south of Inverness – where the party camped on 23 July 1934. The number of recruits increased by approximately one-third during that year and during the march several opportunities were taken to train: in exercises with aircraft, in reconnaissance and in river crossings.

The Musical Ride, the Royal Scots Greys, at the Royal Show, Warwick, July 1931.

In 1934 the regiment’s period in Scotland brought one of its customs to the notice of the Lord Lyon King of Arms, whose jurisdiction over all heraldic business in Scotland was – and still is – both absolute and active. The custom was the flying in barracks of the Royal Standard of Scotland: ‘or, a lion rampant gules, armed and langued azure, within a double tressure flory counter-flory gules’. The Lord Lyon asserted that the regiment’s use of this standard was not permitted since its use was reserved to the Sovereign, the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Secretary of State for, and Keeper of the Great Seal of, Scotland. The regiment disputed this and, aided by the Colonel-in-Chief –

HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught – together with research that proved that the banner had been flown both as a camp colour and the commanding officer's pennant since 1894 without its use having been previously disputed, won its case. The Royal Standard of Scotland continues to be flown by the present regiment's commanding officer – a unique occurrence in the British Army of a regimental commanding officer flying a Royal Standard.

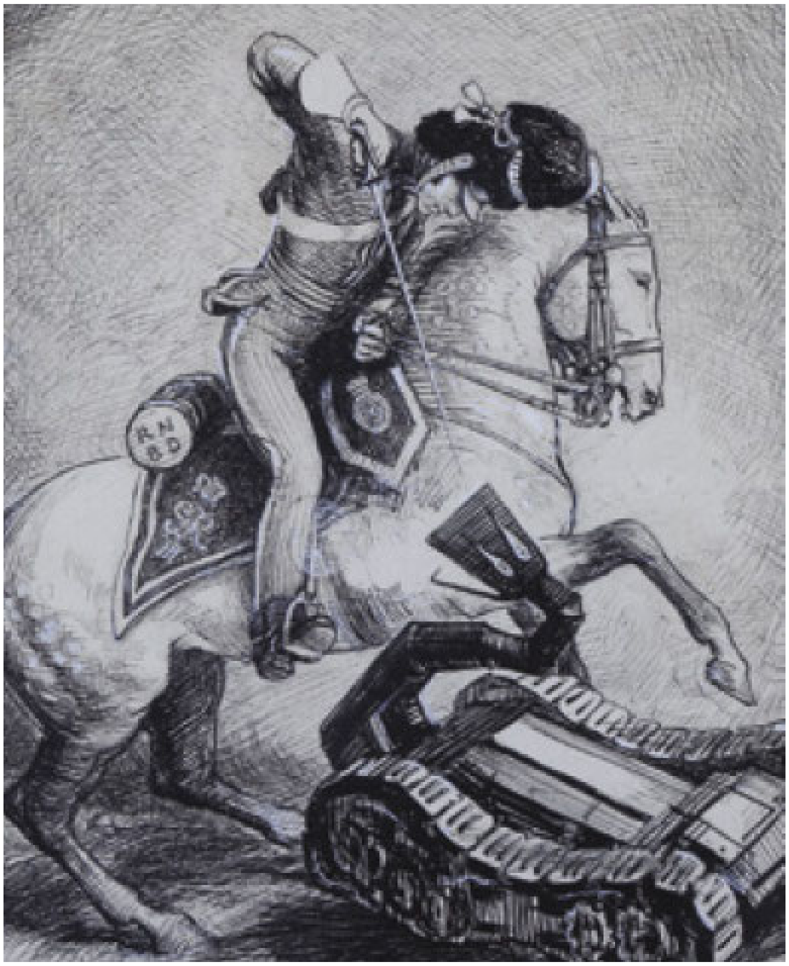
Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier) George Pigot-Moodie MC, Commanding Officer of the Royal Scots Greys, together with his trumpeter, during the regiment's recruiting march through the Highlands of Scotland, July–August 1934.

For the greater part of 1935 the round of training and recreation continued in Scotland, the regiment actively participating in occasions celebrating King George V's Silver Jubilee of that year. In November 1935, the Greys left Scotland and moved to Aldershot, where they joined the 1st Cavalry Brigade. In 1937 the grave of Ensign Charles Ewart was discovered in a disused cemetery in Manchester and the remains were disinterred, to be reburied in 1938 in a tomb on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. At that time, too, it became apparent that mechanisation was again likely to be imposed upon the regiment. In an effort to alert Scotland to this radical and regimentally unpopular idea, the Commanding Officer brought it to the attention of each of the Scottish Members of Parliament in the hope of enlisting their support to resist it. The press also took up the story and did its best to influence public opinion in opposition to mechanisation. How much the War Office's actions owed to the public outcry, how much to the influence of the Scottish MPs and how much to other reasons is not recorded but the desired result was achieved and the regiment was not mechanised. However, Lieutenant-Colonel Cyril Gaisford-St Lawrence, Commanding Officer 1936–39, received a strongly worded reprimand from the Army Council for the unorthodox way in which he had seen fit to criticise army and government policy.

Soldiers of a composite squadron, the Royal Scots Greys, watering their horses while in camp at Stanstead Park, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire, August–September 1937. The horses wear browbands to keep flies out of their eyes and the soldiers nearest to the camera are Troopers Moodie and Tyson, Lance-Corporal Dickson and Troopers Cunningham and Chalmers.

In October 1937 the Greys moved to Hounslow, where they played polo, took part in manoeuvres near Basingstoke in August 1938 and, on 10 September 1938, were told that they were to move at short notice to Palestine. Two squadrons and the machine-gun troop, plus Regimental Headquarters, were to go; C Squadron was to return to Edinburgh to form the beginnings of a mounted depot. At the end of the month, taking its horses, the regiment left Britain, arriving at Haifa ten days later.

The regiment’s function in Palestine was similar to that exercised seventeen years previously, in 1921: keeping the Jewish settlers and the Palestinian Arabs apart. Dawn raids on Arab villages suspected of harbouring terrorists were the norm but these rarely produced much in the way of illegal caches of arms; however, the regiment, because of its use of horses, was capable to a far greater degree than a motorised column would have been of the silent – and surprise – approach to such villages. Its role was in direct support of the Palestine Police Force and it was stationed for eighteen months at Rehovot, 15 miles from Jaffa. In January 1939 the Greys spent three weeks on manoeuvres with the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force and a number of British regiments in the Jordan valley.

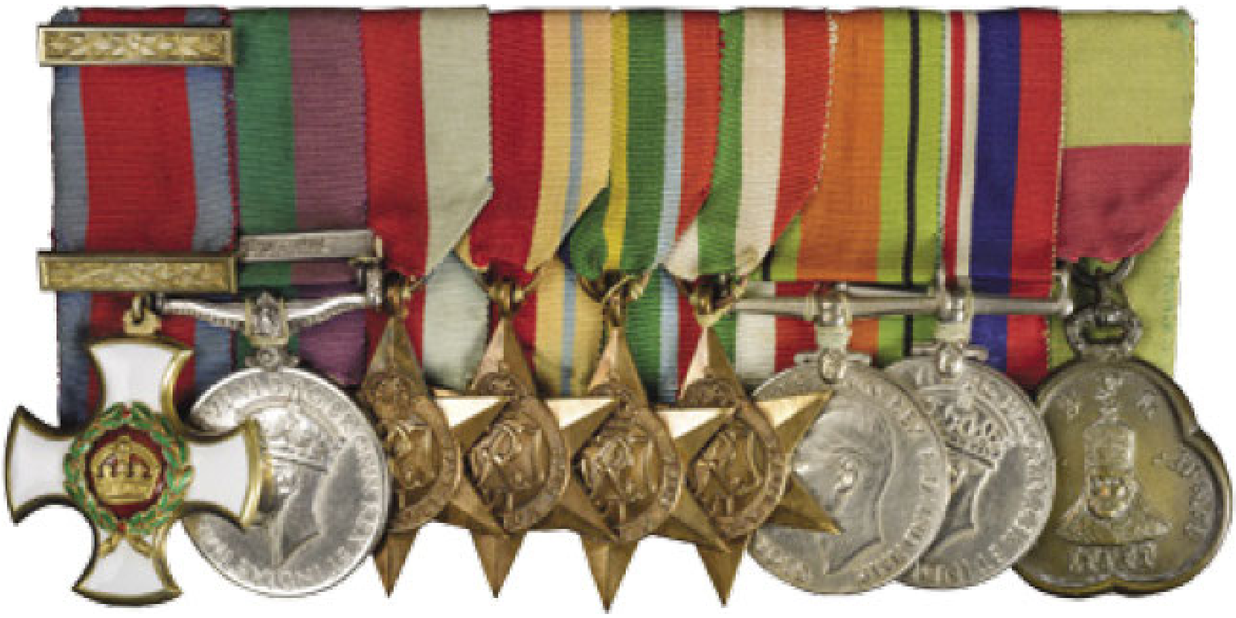


The 'Greys' and the Dragon; in commemoration of the good news that this famous regiment has successfully defied mechanisation by Ernest Howard Shepard OBE MC; this cartoon was published in Punch on 10 November 1937.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, on 3 September 1939, the mounted depot in Edinburgh was the centre to which all the regiment's reservists had to report. Several hundred of them having done so – many of whom were no doubt looking forward to being mounted again – they were all promptly posted to a labour battalion in France, where it was felt they were needed far more than in Palestine. The remaining cavalry reservists, officers and other ranks, joined the regiment in Palestine by the middle of October 1939.

'The Lone Sentinel'; a trooper of the Royal Scots Greys on sentry beside a railway line in Palestine, 1938.

Palestine remained relatively unaffected by the opening moves of the war and, despite occasional outbursts of terrorism, the need decreased for the regiment to remain constantly alert in order to deal with Arab terrorists. Although the Middle East remained something of a backwater until Italy entered the war in 1940, the regiment continued its equestrian training in the hope of being employed in some capacity. However, its lack of mechanisation, especially once the campaigns in Libya, Abyssinia and Eritrea began, meant that it could not be considered for active service and so it continued to send officers and men away on detached duty to other units. Most notable among the officers thus extra-regimentally employed were Lieutenants Michael Borwick, The Honourable Geoffrey Keyes and Neil ('Billy') McLean, all of whom left the regiment to join the newly forming 'special forces'. Although Borwick – who commanded the regiment 1954–57 – was to be captured as a commando on Crete in 1941, both Keyes and McLean rapidly became lieutenant-colonels, while still in their early twenties, and were highly decorated. McLean, who served with the Special Operations Executive, was awarded the DSO in 1943 for intrepidity in Albania and Yugoslavia.



The medals of Lieutenant-Colonel N. L. D. ('Billy') McLean DSO MP, the Royal Scots Greys, who served with distinction with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the Second World War in Ethiopia and Albania. The final medal in the group is the Distinguished Military Medal of Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, awarded in 1941.

Despatch riders, the Royal Scots Greys, Palestine, 1938.

Geoffrey Charles Tasker Keyes was born on 18 May 1917. His father was to become Admiral of the Fleet and first Baron Keyes GCB KCVO CMG DSO. Geoffrey Keyes went from Eton to Sandhurst and in early 1937 was commissioned into the Royal Scots Greys.

After a year in Palestine, where the regiment was still horsed, Keyes volunteered for special duties in 1940. Following training in Scotland and England, and time with the French forces in Norway, he returned to the Middle East in command of a troop of the 11th (Scottish) Commando. By then tensions between Jews and Arabs had abated and the Imperial forces in Palestine concentrated on defeating the Vichy French in Syria. Regimental Headquarters and A Squadron, by now motorised, were among the British troops launched against the French in June 1941, while the Scottish Commandos supported the Australians on the Litani River where Keyes's actions led to the award of the Military Cross.

The regiment remained in Palestine to complete its conversion to tanks but 11th Commando with Major (acting Lieutenant-Colonel) Keyes moved to Egypt. The mood in Cairo was grim following the failure of Operation Battleaxe to relieve the besieged garrison in Tobruk.

The winter of 1941, however, was to see the second, and ultimately successful, attempt to lift the siege. To support 8th Army's Operation Crusader, a force was landed by submarine some 250 miles behind the enemy lines in Cyrenaica. Its role was to attack General Rommel's headquarters and the German base installations and communications at the moment Crusader was launched. The London Gazette recorded Keyes' actions:

Keyes deliberately selected for himself the command of the detachment detailed to attack what was undoubtedly the most hazardous of these objectives – the residence and headquarters of [General Rommel]. This attack, even if initially successful, meant almost certain death for those who took part in it.

He led his detachment without guides, in dangerous and precipitous country and in pitch darkness, and maintained by his stolid determination and powers of leadership the morale of the detachment. He then found himself forced to modify his original plans in the light of fresh information elicited from neighbouring Arabs, and was left with only one officer and an NCO with whom to break into General Rommel’s residence and deal with the guards and Headquarters Staff.

At zero hour on the night of 17th–18th November, 1941, having despatched the covering party to block the approaches to the house, he himself with the two others crawled forward past the guards, through the surrounding fence and so up to the house itself. Without hesitation, he boldly led his party up to the front door, beat on the door and demanded entrance.

Unfortunately, when the door was opened, it was found impossible to overcome the sentry silently, and it was necessary to shoot him. The noise of the shot naturally aroused the inmates of the house and Lieutenant-Colonel Keyes, appreciating that speed was now of the utmost importance, posted the NCO at the foot of the stairs to prevent interference from the floor above.

Lieutenant-Colonel Keyes, who instinctively took the lead, emptied his revolver with great success into the first room and was followed by the other officer who threw a grenade.

Lieutenant-Colonel Keyes with great daring then entered the second room on the ground floor but was shot almost immediately on flinging open the door and fell back into the passage mortally wounded. On being carried outside by his companions he died within a few minutes.

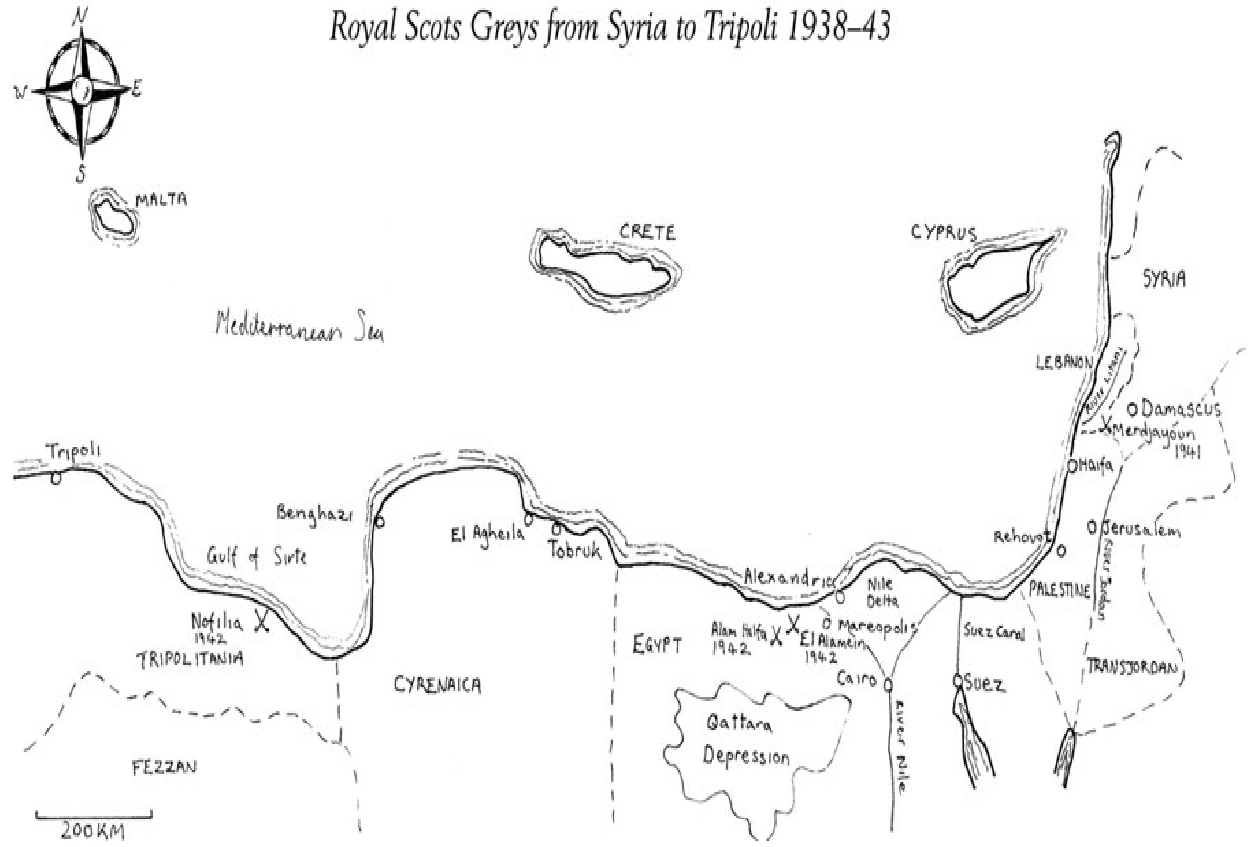
Keyes is buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery near Benghazi in Libya. His VC forms part of the Lord Ashcroft Collection, on display in the Imperial War Museum.

John Ross

Father and son: Second Lieutenant Geoffrey Keyes and Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes, 1937.

The medals of the late Lieutenant-Colonel Geoffrey Keyes: VC, Military Cross, General Service medal with Palestine clasp, 1939–45 Star; Africa Star, Defence Medal, War Medal, Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star. (Courtesy of the Lord Ashcroft Collection/© IWM)

Royal Scots Greys from Syria to Tripoli 1938–43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FEZZAN
200KM

The early years of the war were characterised in the British Army overseas by the existence of short-lived military forces and columns, the titles of which were drawn from their commanders' surnames. A survey of the regiment's activities in 1940 and 1941 reveals first 'Bluecol', then 'Trotcol', 'Heyforce', 'Habforce' and finally 'Todcol'. Of all these forces, only Bluecol departed from convention inasmuch as it took its title from the nickname, 'Bluebell', of Lieutenant D. N. Stewart. The nickname resulted from that officer's habitually highly polished appearance, due – it was implied – to the regular use of a metal polish called Bluebell; 'Duggie' Stewart (1913–92), a gallant and much-decorated officer who commanded the regiment twice, 1945–47 and 1950–54, was also a distinguished showjumper who represented his country at the 1948 and 1952 Olympic Games, winning a gold medal at the latter. Todcol was named after the regiment's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. N. Todd MC – who commanded 1939–42 and, as a brigadier, was Colonel of the Regiment 1947–58; the column was formed in May 1941 to take part in the invasion of Syria.

The invasion of Syria was necessitated by that territory – which had been administered under mandate by France since the end of the First World War – being used under the auspices of Vichy France by the Axis air forces for refuelling en route to Iraq, where the Axis was aiding a revolt against the British. Syria was also perceived as providing a potential second front for the Axis against British forces in Egypt and Palestine, which were engaged against Axis forces to their west in Libya. Todcol comprised Regimental Headquarters, the machine-gun troop and A Squadron together with B Squadron of the Staffordshire Yeomanry; at first, it formed part of the reserve of the invasion force and was added to the 7th Australian Division. Syria was held in some strength by Vichy French forces and initial progress was slow. On 11 June 1941 Todcol was reinforced by Australian light tanks, infantry and anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns and ordered forward in support of other Australian forces towards Merdjayoun. After a hard-fought advance against numerically superior French forces, the hastily formed brigade was fiercely counter-attacked on 15 June and forced to withdraw from its broad front after sustaining losses. After a series of counter-attacks by both sides, the French eventually withdrew from Merdjayoun in the face of growing British, Indian, Australian and Free French forces. Todcol, the formation of which had required rapid and partial mechanisation – into lorries – was disbanded in August 1941. Its existence, and the experience of mechanisation, proved valuable to the regiment, which was gradually coming to terms with its coming role and the inevitable battlefield obsolescence of the horse.

Trooper Smith, B Squadron, the Royal Scots Greys, filling a machine-gun belt, Western Desert, late 1942. Behind him is an M3 Grant medium tank of the regiment.

That mechanisation was on the way was not doubted; rumours to that effect had become fact in May 1941, before the invasion of Syria, when it was announced officially that the regiment was to be mechanised. The Greys' first tanks were Stuarts, the same type as those given to the 3rd Carabiniers in India and nicknamed 'Honeys' by the British. Adaptation was achieved comparatively quickly and in February 1942 the Greys moved close to Cairo to form part of the 8th Armoured Brigade within the 10th Armoured Division.

For the next three months, having learnt how to control its tanks, the regiment was taught how to use them in the rapidly developing concept of desert-based armoured warfare. In April 1942 the first Grant tanks arrived for the Greys and these supplemented the main regimental strength of Stuarts. After the fall of Tobruk, on 20 June 1942, the 8th Army withdrew, the Greys being part of the retreat, and the regiment relinquished its tanks; the Stuarts went to 4th County of London Yeomanry and the Grants to the Tank Delivery Regiment. By 8 July, however, re-equipped with Stuarts, Grants and Lees, the regiment was back in the great military camp and holding area of Mareopolis, 25 miles by road south-west of Alexandria.

Soldiers of the Royal Scots Greys aboard an M3 Grant medium tank, Western Desert, 1942. On the left is Trooper (later Sergeant) Alexander McMeekin, who would be awarded two Military Medals for exemplary tank gunnery in Italy in 1943; on the right is Lance Corporal George 'Tarry' Shaw (later Major QM and MBE), who served in the regiment 1934–67.

At the end of August 1942, the regiment became involved in its first tank battle, when Panzerarmee Afrika made its advance towards the Nile Delta and Cairo. Moving to the support of several outnumbered armoured regiments, the Greys gained valuable experience in action for the loss of two Grant tanks. At the second battle of El Alamein, in October 1942, the regiment formed part of the 7th Armoured Division and was with the force that was shelled while being caught between two minefields. Eventually escaping from that trap, the Greys moved forward as the German forces retreated towards Tripoli.

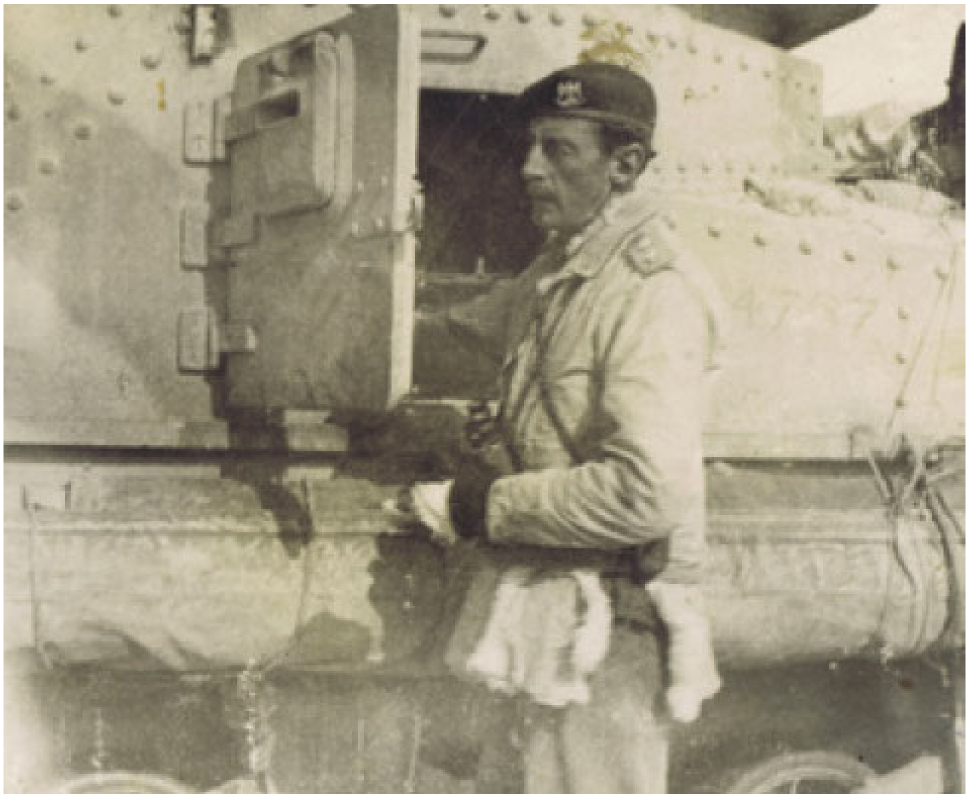
On 4 November 1942, during the advance on Tripoli, the regiment formed the right echelon of the 4th Light Armoured Brigade and was advancing westward when a battery of Italian guns opened fire. The two heavy squadrons, in Grants, returned fire at long range with their 75mm sponson-mounted guns, while B Squadron, the light squadron in Stuarts, worked round to the left flank of the battery and into some dead ground. B Squadron's leader, Major F. E. S. (Frank) Bowlby, interpreting with true cavalry spirit the Commanding Officer's order to attack, led his Stuarts out of the dead ground in a bumping, bounding charge with all guns firing while the other two squadrons distracted the Italian gunners. B Squadron overran the battery, meted out death and destruction and secured eleven guns, thirty vehicles and 300 prisoners at the cost of one Stuart lost and no casualties to the regiment.

In mid-November 1942, during the westward advance on Tripoli, having gradually lost some tanks during the few small engagements in which it was involved and others due to mechanical difficulties, the regiment obtained new tanks from a squadron of the Warwickshire Yeomanry. Included among these were two Shermans, the tank which the Americans called the M4 and which characterised much of the Allied armour for the remainder of the war. That tank's main armament was a 75mm turret-mounted gun, the same as the sponson-mounted gun in the Grant and Lee tanks, for which it carried ninety rounds of mixed-type ammunition; its armour was a considerable improvement over that of its predecessors, being 75mm in the turret and 50mm in the hull. With a crew of five, it was less roomy than the Grant or the Lee but it gave those who used it in the Western Desert a temporary advantage over the opposing German tanks. Its armament was completed by two .30-06 Browning machine guns mounted in the turret and the hull, with

4,750 rounds of ammunition, and one .50 Browning machine gun mounted on top of the turret, for which 300 rounds were carried.

By the end of November 1942, the regiment had relinquished most of its tanks to other units but then took over those of 1st Royal Tank Regiment, most of which were Shermans. By 12 December its strength in tanks was as follows: HQ Squadron, three Stuarts and one Grant; A Squadron, one Stuart, two Grants and six Shermans; B Squadron, sixteen Stuarts; C Squadron, one Stuart, one Grant and eleven Shermans. This was the regiment's force in the advance from El Agheila, on the Gulf of Sirte, beyond which they finally caught up with the retreating German rearguard. A brief action followed, the Germans losing two tanks to the Greys' one. On 17 December, at Nofilia, contact was resumed with the Germans and the regiment was ordered to engage the enemy by Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, commanding the New Zealand Division.

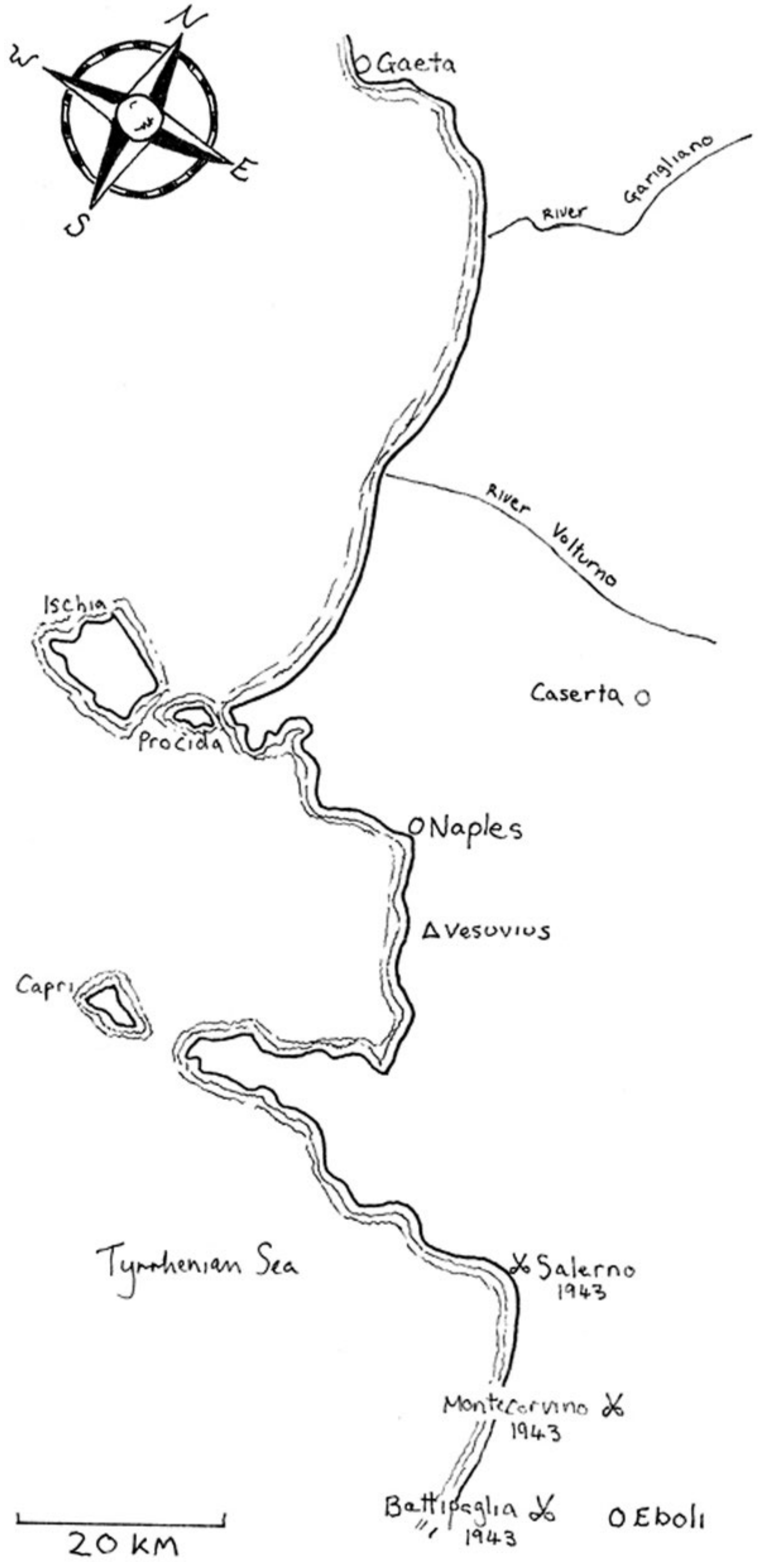
The medals of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, Bt., DSO, who served in the Royal Scots Greys 1923–43, commanding the regiment 1942–43 and who died of wounds received in Italy in 1943.



Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, Bt., beside an M3 Grant medium tank, Western Desert, 1942.

The pennant flown on the converted Stuart tank called Astra, the command vehicle of the Royal Scots Greys' Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, from El Alamein to Nofilia, 1942, at which latter engagement the tank was knocked out. The pennant is a regimentally made version of the Royal Arms for Scotland, the commanding officer of the regiment having been granted dispensation to fly them from his tank.

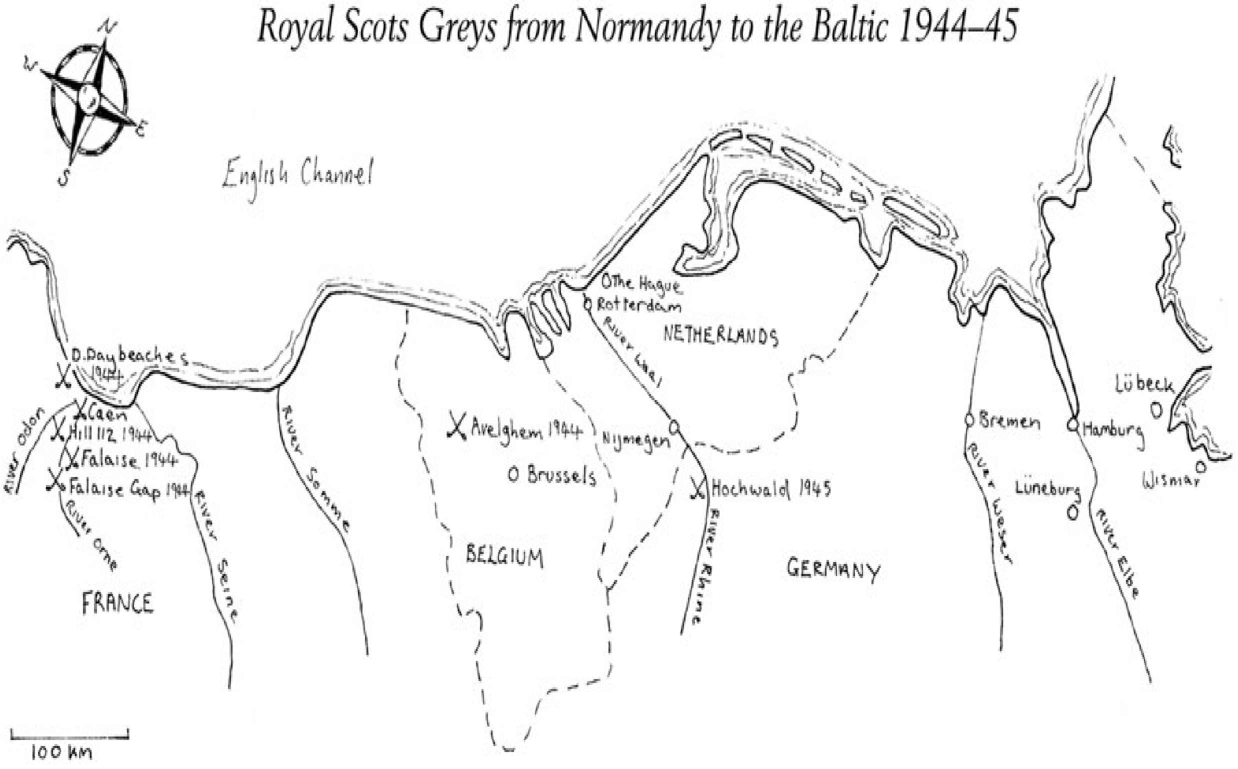
Royal Scots Greys in Italy 1943


N
W
E
S
Gaeta
River Garigliano
River Volturno
Ischia
Procida
Caserta
Naples
Vesuvius
Capri
Tyrrhenian Sea
Salerno 1943
Montecorvino 1943
Battipaglia 1943
Eboli
20 KM

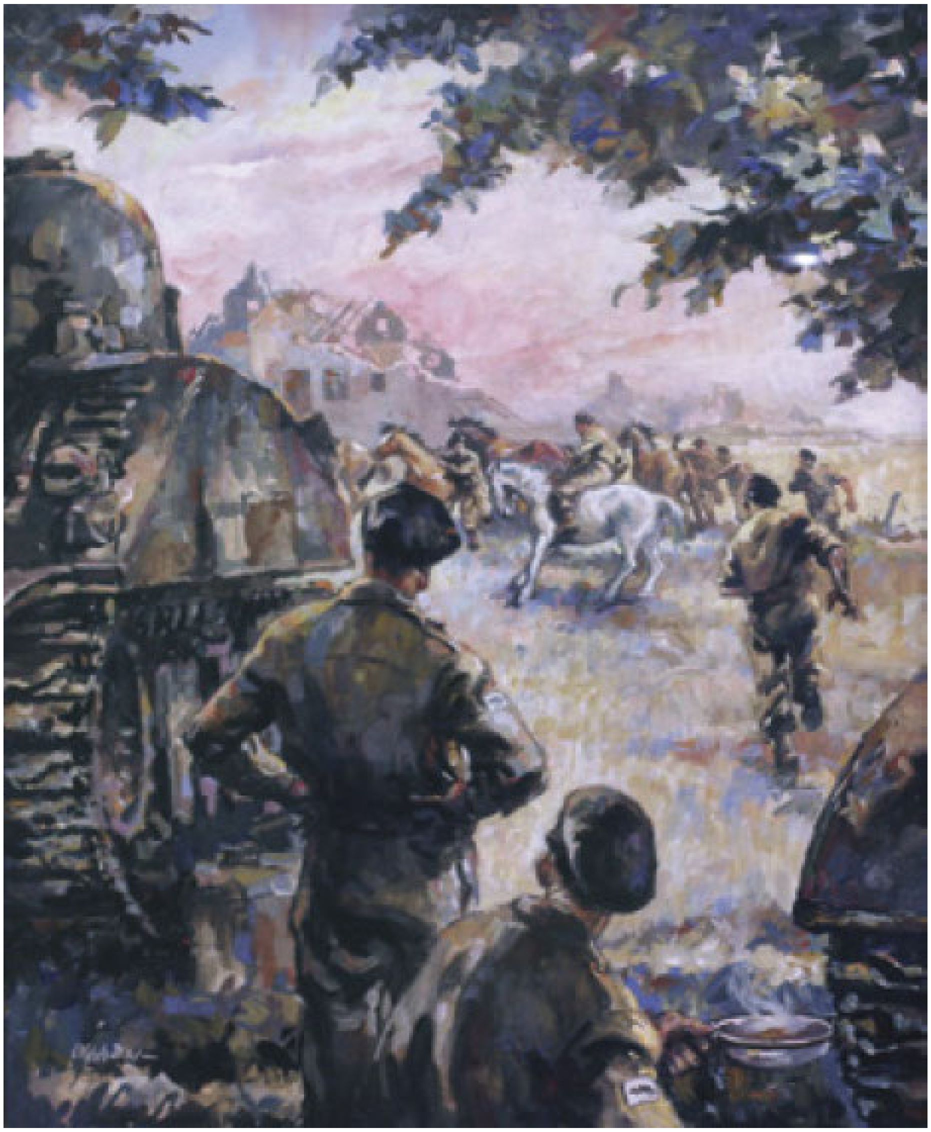
The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, Bt., whose nickname was ‘Lugs’, led the attack mounted in his command vehicle, a Stuart with the turret removed, which was named Astra. A rapid attack on the flank of the German position led the Greys into its centre and a considerable firefight resulted, the speed of the Greys’ charge catching many of the enemy, including two anti-tank batteries, completely unprepared. The Germans counter-attacked from positions that the regiment had not reached, and a duel took place for the remainder of the day, the Greys eventually losing seven tanks and an officer and two men.

More fighting took place all the way to Tripoli, which was occupied before the end of January 1943, and the regiment settled in for a period of rest and retraining in and around that city. For a brief period, B Squadron seemed about to convert from their light Stuart tanks to British Crusaders – a marque virtually obsolete by that time – but in the event the regiment’s strength was fixed at three squadrons of Shermans.

The Greys’ next action was at Salerno, south of Naples on the Italian west coast, following the Allies’ capture of Sicily and armistice with Italy. Codenamed Operation Avalanche and part of the Allies’ invasion of the Italian mainland, the landing at Salerno was intended to divide the occupying German forces in southern Italy and lead to the capture of the important port of Naples. The regiment’s squadrons were separated for training and for the landing: A Squadron joined 167th Infantry Brigade, B Squadron 201st Guards Motor Brigade and C Squadron 169th Infantry Brigade. The regiment left Tripoli on 4 September 1943 and the landing craft and assault ships arrived off Salerno on 9 September. A and C Squadrons landed with the first wave and were quickly in action against a well-entrenched and highly motivated German defence dug in on the dominating high ground inland from the beaches; enemy tanks were also present in quantity. The two squadrons experienced some delay in providing the much-needed support for the beleaguered Allied infantry: this was caused by boggy ground in which eight tanks of A Squadron became temporarily stuck but they were freed in time to engage German tanks which were seriously impeding the infantry’s advance. An A Squadron tank commanded by the Glaswegian Sergeant Alexander McMeekin destroyed two enemy tanks in rapid succession, shared in the destruction of a third and disabled a fourth, the squadron having attacked and surprised them in the flank; McMeekin was awarded the Military Medal. C Squadron's tanks fought with numerous German tanks in the battle for Montecorvino airfield but weight of numbers and determined enemy opposition eventually forced the squadron's withdrawal. By comparison, B Squadron and Regimental Headquarters had a quieter first day in Italy. For the next week, the regiment's squadrons were frequently in action as the Allies gradually fought their way inland from the beachhead against stiff German resistance; enemy armoured vehicles were destroyed and infantry killed and captured, regimental casualties were sustained, decorations for gallantry earned and valuable experience gained about tank operations in country that was very different from that in North Africa. The battle for Salerno continued until 16 September, with the Allied forces gradually gaining ground and linking with the 8th Army, which had advanced northward, and largely unopposed, through Calabria from Sicily. Naples was entered on 1 October and, from there, the regiment advanced with the rest of the Allied forces, moving gradually northward up the Italian peninsula.


Royal Scots Greys from Normandy to the Baltic 1944–45
N
E
S
W
English Channel
D.Day beaches 1944
Caen
Hill 112 1944
Falaise 1944
Falaise Gap 1944
River Odon
River Orne
River Seine
FRANCE
River Somme
Avelghem 1944
Brussels
BELGIUM
The Hague
Rotterdam
River Waal
NETHERLANDS
Nijmegen
Hochwald 1945
River Rhine
GERMANY
Bremen
River Weser
Lüneburg
Hamburg
River Elbe
Lübeck
Wismar
100 km

The country was far from ideal for tanks and, tactically, the advance into northern Italy was a frustrating experience for the armoured elements of the Allied forces. As the season advanced, so Italy’s heavy autumnal rains turned dirt tracks and fields into areas thick with mud which made progress difficult, slow and disagreeable – particularly for tank commanders required to remain alert and with the turret hatches open. Field Marshal Lord Carver, in Second to None: The Royal Scots Greys 1919–45, credited Lieutenant A. W. D. (Alec) Lewis of B Squadron with finding a solution to the problem of regular soakings from the incessant rain: this involved the use of umbrellas by tank commanders. While the first Duke of Wellington would undoubtedly have disapproved of that practice, it seems to have been effective and led to the squadron becoming known as ‘Brolly Squadron’. Alec Lewis (1915–91) eventually became a colonel, was made OBE and awarded the MC; he commanded the Greys in the late 1950s. Determined German opposition joined the heavy rains in slowing the Allied advance and every mile north of Naples was contested and hard-fought, with the resultant casualties and gallantry decorations: on 17/18 October, Sergeant McMeekin won a bar to his Military Medal for determinedly pressing on with an attack, despite all A Squadron’s officers having become casualties. After three months of hard campaigning, in appalling weather, in the country between the rivers Volturno and Garigliano, the regiment was withdrawn from the line in December 1943 and returned to Naples; handing over its tanks to 50th Royal Tank Regiment, the Greys left Naples for Britain at the end of January 1944.



A war artist's interpretation of an unrecorded incident during a lull in the fighting in Normandy 1944. Destruction of farms and fences had left many horses loose in the countryside and this picture depicts a brief return to the joys of riding by soldiers of the Royal Scots Greys; watercolour by Leslie Oliphant.

The invasion of north-west Europe was being planned and when the Greys returned to Scotland on 10 February 1944, moving to Worthing in Sussex the following day, it was clear that the regiment was going to be part of it. New tanks were received: these were Sherman Mk IIs, which were not as popular as the diesel Sherman IIIs which the regiment had driven in Italy, and one Sherman Mk V(C) was allocated to each troop. The Mk V(C) Sherman mounted a 17-pounder gun in its turret and was the most powerfully armed British tank of the war; known as the Firefly, it was equal in armament to the latest marques of German tanks and, as an excellent mobile gun platform, was to prove a valuable asset in the invasion of France. The tank's crew was reduced to four, the hull machine gunner and his gun being removed to maximise ammunition storage.

The crew of an M4 Sherman tank of the Royal Scots Greys enjoy a 'brew' before resuming battle near Üdem, during Operation Blockbuster (the later stages of Operation Veritable – the battle of the Reichswald) on 27 February 1945.

For the invasion of France, the regiment formed part of 4th Armoured Brigade and landed between 7 and 9 June 1944 on the beaches north of Caen. The Greys' operational role between the landing and the middle of August was to form the left of the British 2nd Army, which had landed on Sword, Juno and Gold beaches on 6 June and which formed the left of the Allied invasion force. The object of the exercise was to draw the predictably fierce German resistance into and around the Caen sector, allowing the US 1st Army, which had landed on Omaha and Utah beaches to the west, to pivot around it, break out on the right and race for Paris. Gradually the British position around Caen grew stronger, necessitating the withdrawal of opposing German armour from other sectors, and the regiment was heavily involved in engaging German tanks, usually of the superior Tiger or Panther types, around Caen to the west and south.

In July 1944 at Hill 112, the most prominent point on a ridge south-west of Caen and between the Odon and Orne Rivers, the regiment's ability adequately to support an infantry attack depended upon the clearing of German armour from overlooking high ground before risking so many tanks in what was effectively an open salient. German tanks and artillery were so well positioned, with their guns ranged-in accurately on the ridge's few crossing points, that they could hit any British tank which appeared over the ridge on the only tracks available; numerous British tanks and their crews became casualties as a result of this. The regiment's three sabre squadrons all fought lengthy and costly engagements around Hill 112 in that bocage terrain – rolling country with woods and hedges – which made it ideal for the German armour to fight aggressively defensive actions but difficult for the regiment effectively to fight offensive ones without sustaining insupportable casualties. So, until the weight of Allied numbers eventually told, the Germans were able to delay the British advance considerably and inflict many casualties. The regiment was, though, occasionally able to reciprocate. The good shooting of Sergeant Alexander McMeekin, so well demonstrated at Salerno, resulted in the destruction of three out of six German self-propelled guns and a tank in fairly quick succession, but McMeekin was wounded shortly afterwards and joined the considerable number of regimental casualties sustained in a week of intense fighting around Hill 112. Caen fell on 13 July 1944 and the regiment was part of the

Allied forces which advanced south to Falaise in time to inflict heavy casualties on the retreating German forces escaping through the Falaise Gap – a gap between Allied forces south of the town. The action at Falaise effectively ended German resistance in that area of Normandy and, from then on, the regiment headed east in pursuit of the retreating German armies.

Compared to the eleven weeks of intense fighting in Normandy, the speed of the regiment's advance east to the Low Countries was remarkable. Leaving the Falaise area on 24 August, the regiment was in Belgium by 5 September 1944 and, after encountering some resistance north of Brussels, was in the Netherlands before the end of the month. During the winter of 1944 the fighting in the 'battle of the Bulge' did not involve the Greys and the regiment did not go into action again until the end of February 1945 when, for a week, it and accompanying forces fought their way into Germany and through the Hochwald to open the road to the Rhine.

The medals of Lieutenant-Colonel D. N. (Duggie) Stewart DSO MC and bar who commanded the Royal Scots Greys 1945–47 and 1950–53.

By the end of April 1945, the Rhine had been crossed, one squadron of the regiment had crossed the Elbe and the Allied vice was closing on Germany. The eastern jaw of the vice was represented by the forces of the Red Army, already perceived by the British – and possibly also by the Americans – as the next potential enemy. Since what the Russians took they were likely to keep, if only for bargaining purposes, it rapidly became apparent that some means had to be found of denying them the Danish peninsula and archipelago, so a combined force of the regiment and the 1st Canadian Parachute Regiment was sent on an eastward dash to seal off Denmark from the advancing Russians. The regiment's tanks left Lüneburg on 1 May 1945; C Squadron, which had already crossed the Elbe, was leading, carrying the Canadians on the back of the tanks, speeding along roads crowded with German refugees fleeing west from the Russians. The regiment reached Wismar on the Baltic at 1pm on 2 May. The vanguard of the Red Army arrived eight hours later and found the route to Denmark blocked by the Greys and the Canadians. No human casualties were sustained by the regiment in the race to Wismar but the regimental mascot, a Muscovy duck called 'Corporal Haggis', was not recognised as regimental property and was killed and eaten by a Canadian detachment. The duck had been found and adopted in Italy by the tank crew of Lieutenant The Honourable John Warrender MC, later Lord Bruntisfield, and accompanied the regiment through the Italian and Normandy campaigns and in its advance through Germany.

The regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel D. N. Stewart DSO MC, began a seven-year posting in Germany from Wismar in 1945 and, as the Second World War ended and the Cold War began, started to occupy a strategic role that was to become familiar for the next forty-five years.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER EIGHT

A Centurion tank of B Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers in Kuwait, September 1961.

3RD CARABINIERS, 1946–70

While stationed in Risalpur, the regiment sent two-and-a-half squadrons to Delhi in March 1946 for the Victory parade; on that momentous occasion, both regimental standards were carried. The 3rd Carabiniers remained stationed at Risalpur for the rest of 1946 but on 1 January 1947 it received orders to return to Britain. The regiment left Bombay

on 17 January and arrived home on 4 February 1947; it was the last British cavalry regiment to leave India, then in the throes of partition. Initially based at Warburg Barracks, Aldershot, the regiment then moved to Bordon in Hampshire and from there, at the end of 1947, to Cachy Barracks at Perham Down in Wiltshire. While at Bordon, on 23 July, the 3rd Carabiniers were presented with a single new standard by HRH The Duke of Gloucester, who had presented two standards to the newly amalgamated regiment twenty years before. In December 1949 the two old standards were laid up: that of the 3rd in the garrison church in Tidworth and that of the 6th in Canterbury Cathedral. Following its return home, the regiment's first tanks were Cromwells and Comets, British marques developed in the latter years of the Second World War.

The 3rd Carabiniers returned to a greatly changed Britain, one impoverished by its extraordinary commitment and contribution to victory in the Second World War and very different to the country from which the regiment had sailed ten years before. Returning home meant coming to terms with a society undergoing postwar change and a new threat to international peace from the Soviet Union. In 1947, Britain was two years into the term of office of a Labour government elected in 1945 by a landslide victory. The government was committed to a radical programme of welfare and nationalisation and was trying to run a country virtually bankrupted by war; Britain's overseas responsibilities were reduced only by the loss of India. The United States had the atom bomb, the Soviet Union exercised control over the greater part of Eastern Europe and Britain had debts, a far-flung empire and an army that it could not afford to maintain. All the demobilisations of wartime soldiers had been completed by 1947 but national service continued. The talk in the army was of reductions, amalgamations and even disbandments. The disappearance of the Indian Army in 1948 involved the transfer of many officers from that service to the British Army and this temporary enlargement made sweeping reductions in numbers and regiments even more likely. However, the Soviet Union's siege of Berlin in 1948, the daily worsening situation in what became the State of Israel in May 1948 and increasing terrorist activity in Malaya all combined to stave off the anticipated army cuts. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, following shortly after the Communist takeover in China, convinced the government that its defence capability was not yet ripe for reduction. The perceived threat to Western Europe from the Soviet Union during the Cold War meant that a substantial armoured presence was going to be necessary in Germany for the foreseeable future.

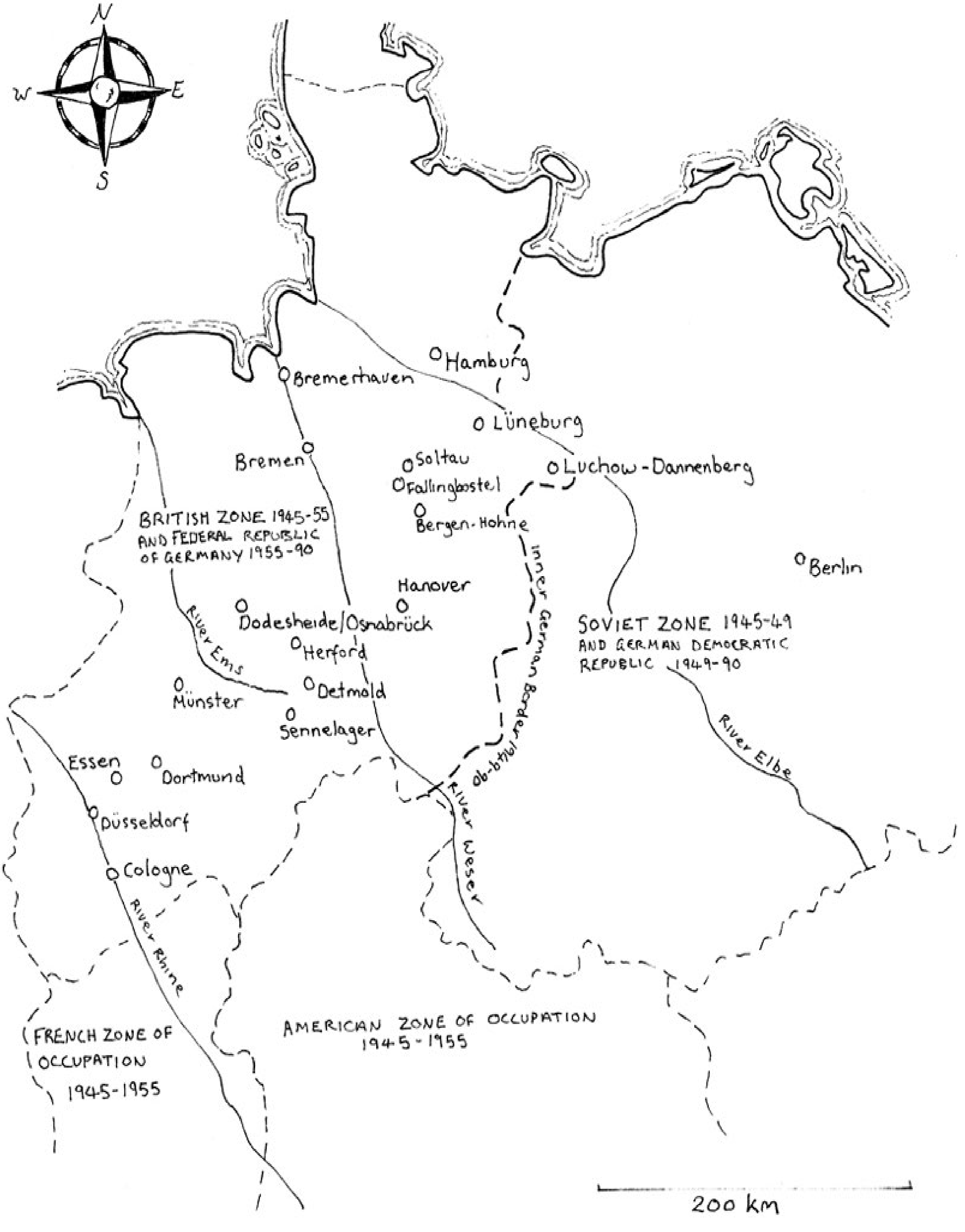
On its return home, the regiment's first duties involved working with the Territorial Army but in 1949 its role changed to become that of an anti-tank regiment and in 1950 it was equipped with the M10 Wolverine tank destroyer. The M10 had a 17-pounder gun mounted in an open turret on the hull of a Sherman tank.

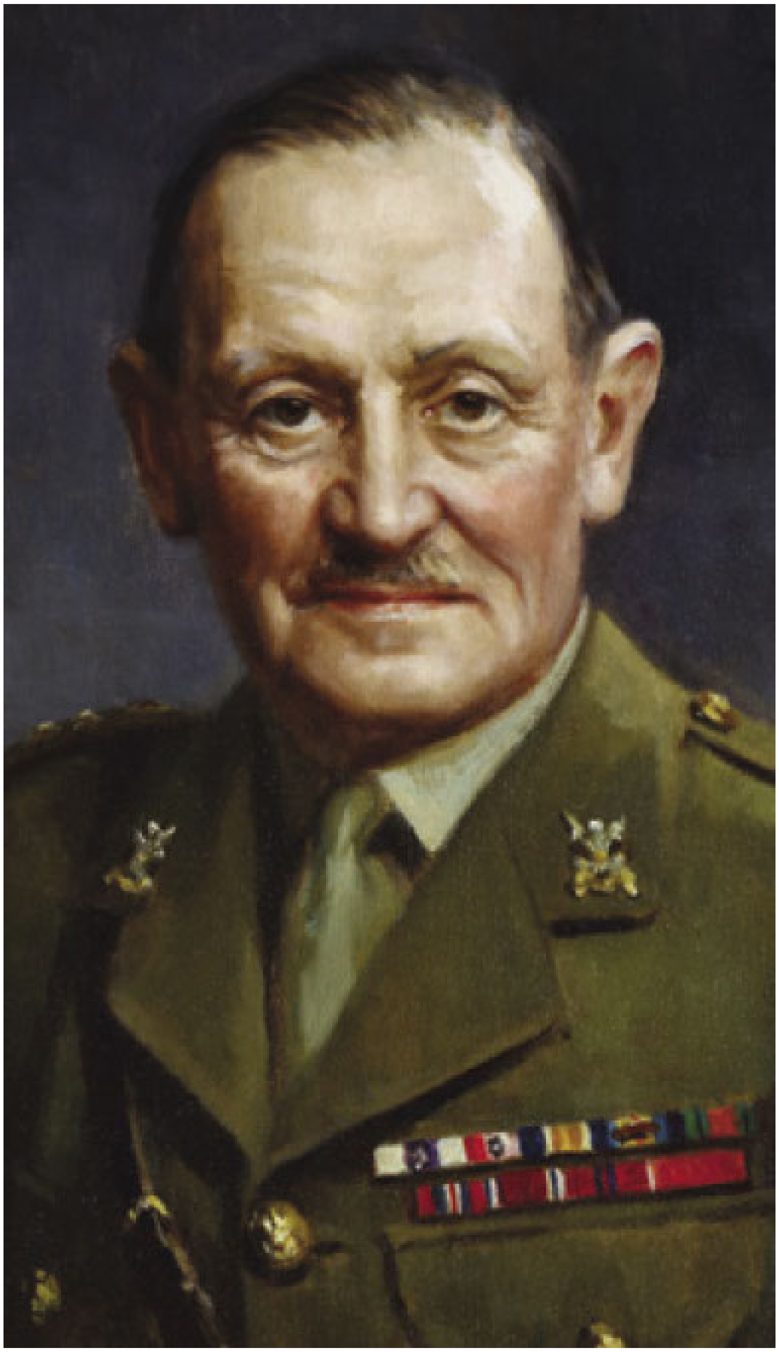
During the Korean War of 1950–53 the regiment contributed some officers and men to the first British armoured unit to go to Korea, the 8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars – which served in Korea from November 1950 to December 1951. Three of the volunteers from the 3rd Carabiniers who joined the 8th Hussars at the beginning of the war were killed during it. Korea was an admirable testing ground for the Centurion, the tank that was to equip the Royal Armoured Corps until well into the 1960s. The Centurion also gave those officers and men who served there in tanks experience that was to prove useful in peacetime in the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) during the Cold War.

While some volunteers from the regiment were serving in Korea, the 3rd Carabiniers continued to be based at Perham Down, although occasionally deployed by squadrons and other sections elsewhere in Britain to train or participate in manoeuvres. On 15 April 1950, the regimental war memorial to the dead of the Second World War was unveiled by Field Marshal Sir William Slim GCB GBE DSO MC, Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Late in 1951 the regiment began its move to the newly built Imphal Barracks at Dodesheide, near Osnabrück, to become part of BAOR. It remained stationed there until 1959, initially in its anti-tank role with its M10 tank-destroyers but subsequently, from 1953, being equipped with Centurion tanks as part of its envisaged North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) battlefield role in the defence of northern Europe against an invasion by the Communist countries of the Warsaw Pact nations.

British Army of the Rhine 1946–94

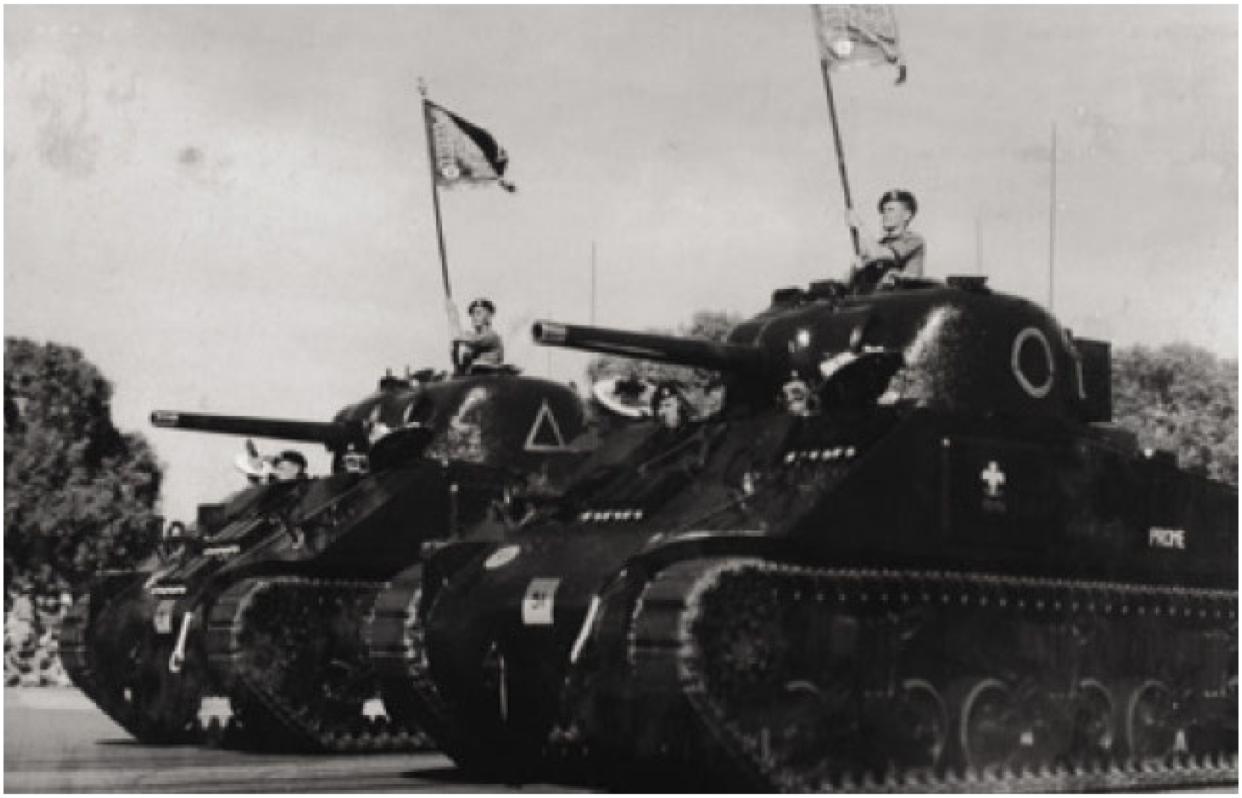
British Forces Germany 1994–2014


N
W
E
S
Hamburg
Bremerhaven
Lüneburg
Bremen
Soltau
Fallingbostel
Luchow-Dannenberg
BRITISH ZONE 1945-55
AND FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY 1955-90
Bergen-Hohne
Inner German Border 1949-90
Berlin
Hanover
Dodesheide/Osnabrück
River Ems
Herford
SOVIET ZONE 1945-49
AND GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC 1949-90
Münster
Detmold
Sennelager
River Elbe
Essen
Dortmund
River Weser
Düsseldorf
Cologne
River Rhine
FRENCH ZONE OF
OCCUPATION
1945-1955
AMERICAN ZONE OF OCCUPATION
1945-1955
200 km



Brigadier William Thomas Gill MC (1893–1967), as Colonel 3rd Carabiniers, an appointment he held 1946–57. Commissioned into 6th Dragoon Guards in September 1913, Gill was mentioned in despatches in 1914, awarded the Military Cross, with a bar for a second award, for bravery in 1918 and appointed a Chevalier of the French Légion

d'Honneur. He commanded 3rd Carabiniers from 1938 until 1941, when he was promoted to command an armoured brigade. He can be seen, as a captain and in Full Dress, on page 168, standing, holding his helmet and gloves, in the row behind the Commanding Officer. Oil on canvas by L. Mills.

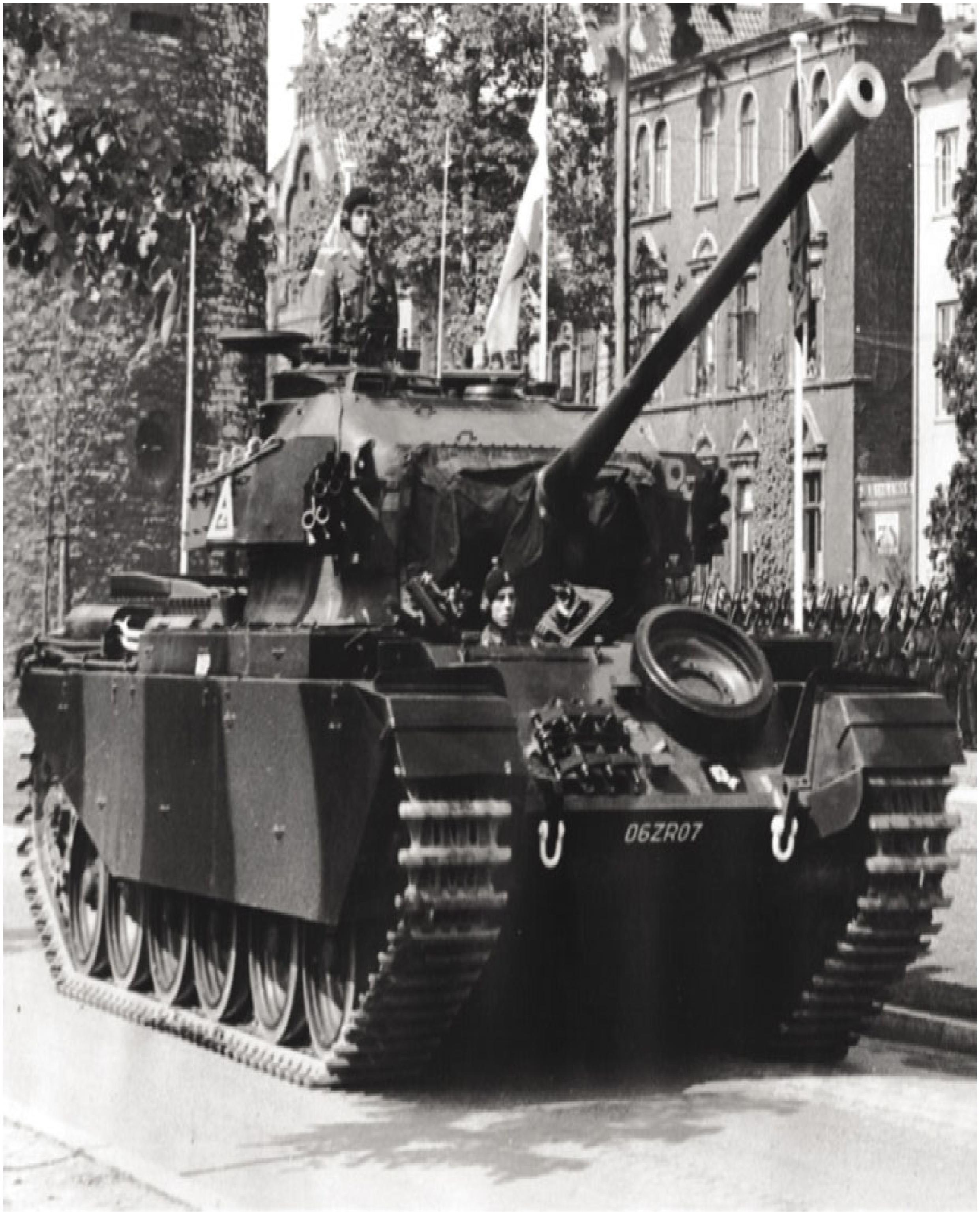


The 'standard' tanks of 3rd Carabiniers at the Victory parade, Delhi, March 1946; the tanks were M4 Shermans. The 3rd Dragoon Guards' standard, furthest from the camera, was borne by Squadron Sergeant-Major Adams and that of 6th Dragoon Guards by Lieutenant B. L. G. Beeson.

The presentation of a new standard to 3rd Carabiniers, Bordon, Hampshire, 23 July 1947. The two old standards, presented in 1927, are shown being marched off parade.

The cavalry amalgamations of the late 1950s did not affect the Carabiniers because, it was stoutly maintained, the regiment had already been amalgamated, thirty-five years before. On 5 November 1956, the day that the first elements of British forces began their attack on Egypt during the crisis over the Suez Canal, the regiment was put on very short notice to move and entrained its tanks in readiness to ship them to the Middle East. Two days later, once the ceasefire had been announced in Egypt, the regiment stood down and returned to its normal BAOR role. In 1959, the regiment left Germany to move to Catterick Camp in the North Riding of Yorkshire and adopt the role of the Royal Armoured Corps' basic training unit. In July 1960, the regiment again moved, to Aliwal Barracks in Tidworth garrison, Hampshire, to become the armoured regiment within the Strategic Reserve. B Squadron was detached to Warminster in Wiltshire as the demonstration squadron at the School of Infantry. In November 1960, C Squadron was sent to Aden – it being government policy at the time to station a squadron of tanks and crews in and near the Persian, or Arabian, Gulf to underline Britain's continuing commitment to its political and commercial influence in that area. As events were shortly afterwards to prove, this was a strategically sensible plan since in 1961 the tiny state of Kuwait, at the head of the Gulf, was threatened with annexation by its large, powerful and newly republican neighbour, Iraq.

Britain and Kuwait had enjoyed friendly relations since 1899, with Britain influencing Kuwaiti foreign policy in return for British military protection and a generous annual subsidy for the Emir. Since 1948, Britain had benefitted from generous concessions on the oil deposits that had been discovered in Kuwait in 1938. On 12 June 1961, the Emir of Kuwait, with British agreement, announced Kuwaiti independence from British influence. Relations between Kuwait and neighbouring Iraq had been strained since the overthrow of the King of Iraq in 1958 and that country's change to republican status; Iraq was also the recipient of arms and materiel from the Soviet Union. The sudden independence of Kuwait appears to have taken Abd al-Karim Qasim, the prime minister and ruler of Iraq, by surprise but on 25 June 1961 he announced his intention of annexing Kuwait forthwith and the Emir appealed to Britain for help. The speed of Britain's response was remarkable and due to two factors: one, that a squadron of 3rd Carabiniers was based in Aden and, two, that 42 Commando – fortuitously – was en route for the Far East in the aircraft carrier HMS Bulwark and so able to divert to Kuwait.

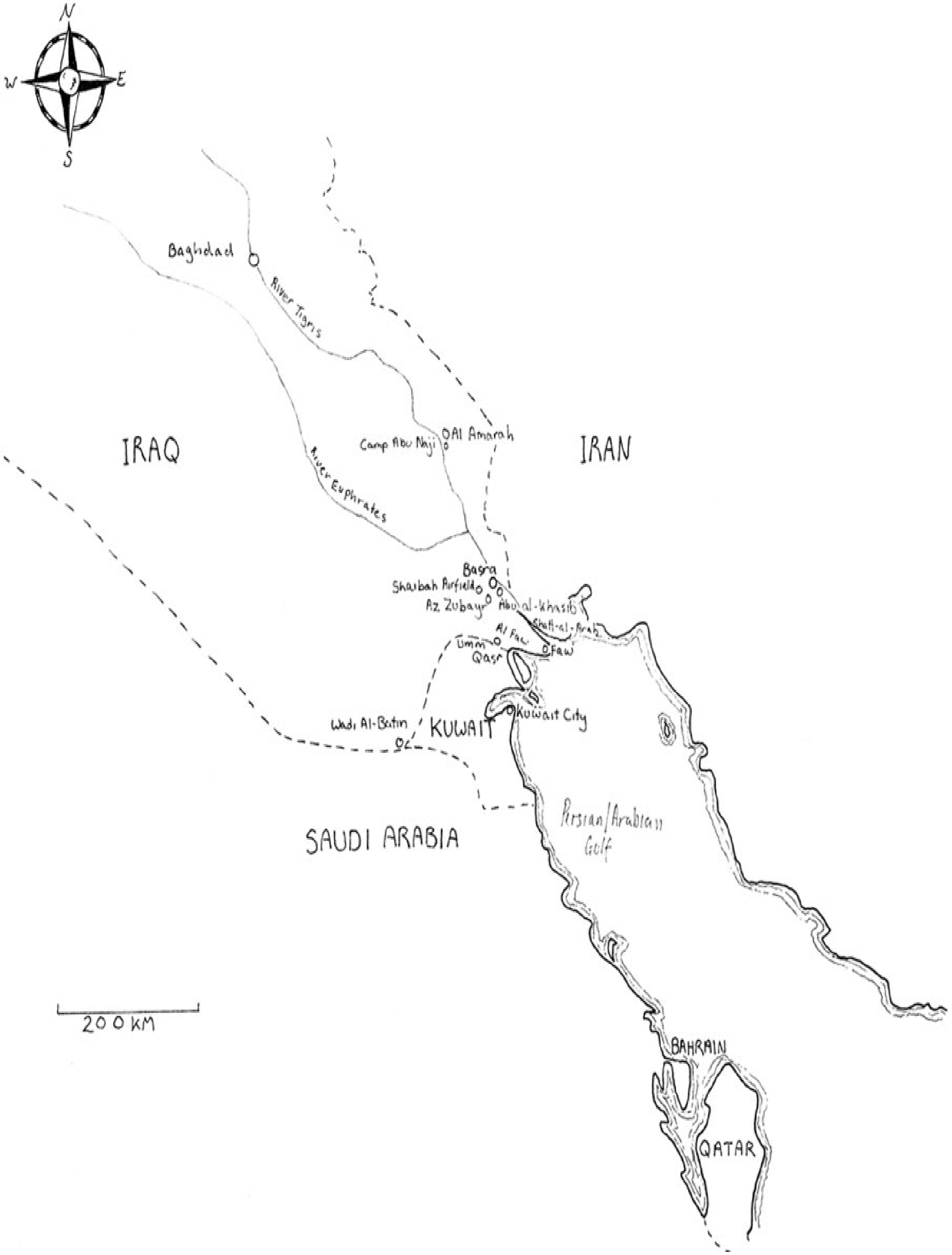


A Centurion tank of 3rd Carabiniers in Osnabrück, 2 July 1953, during the parade to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

A Centurion tank of B Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers, disembarking at Kuwait, August 1961.

The 3rd Carabiniers' C Squadron, commanded by Major John Barkworth, was based in Aden as the duty tank squadron for Middle East operations. On arrival in Aden the squadron was divided in two: one half, known as 'Imphal', would stay on land in Aden while the other half, 'Bishenpur', would remain afloat, with its Centurions, and patrol the Gulf in a tank landing ship (LST) – the two halves would change places at three-monthly intervals. In addition, eight Centurions and ammunition were kept in Kuwait for use by the Kuwaiti Army but available to the British if required. When the order to deploy to Kuwait was received by C Squadron on 28 June 1961, it was in the process of its three-monthly changeover of crews off Bahrain, halfway up the Gulf and thus within a day's sail of Kuwait. The entire squadron was therefore quickly able to embark all its tanks and crews aboard two LSTs, Bastion and Striker, and proceed to Kuwait. C Squadron received the order to land in Kuwait on 30 June and landed on the Kuwaiti coast the next day, thirty minutes ahead of the first wave of 42 Commando. Moving inland at once, the squadron took up defensive positions on the Mutla Ridge, north of Kuwait City and across the main road to Basra, Iraq's largest southern town. Meanwhile, A Squadron commanded by Captain S. A. (Tony) Simmons had been ordered to Kuwait by air. It arrived on 3 July, took over the Kuwaiti Centurions and joined C Squadron on the Mutla Ridge to add its weight to the considerable British naval, military and air force presence off, in and above Kuwait. Two days later, on 5 July, the Commanding Officer, Adjutant, Quartermaster and Regimental Sergeant-Major – together with others from Regimental Headquarters – arrived and completed the regimental deployment. The move from Tidworth to Kuwait required considerable acclimatisation, changes in routine and in the timing of training exercises to avoid the worst of the day's heat but it is recorded that regimental standards of efficiency and hospitality were maintained, cases of heat stroke few in number and that the tanks operated effectively. In mid-August 1961, C Squadron was relieved by B Squadron from Warminster and, no Iraqi attack having materialised, the regiment was included in a general British withdrawal in October, relinquishing its 'Gulf' amphibious role to a squadron of 17th/21st Lancers, which – in turn – handed over to the Royal Scots Greys in 1962.

Regimental operations in the Gulf Region 1961, 1990–91 and 2003–08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Abu al-Khasib
Shatt-al-Arab
Al Faw
Umm Qasr
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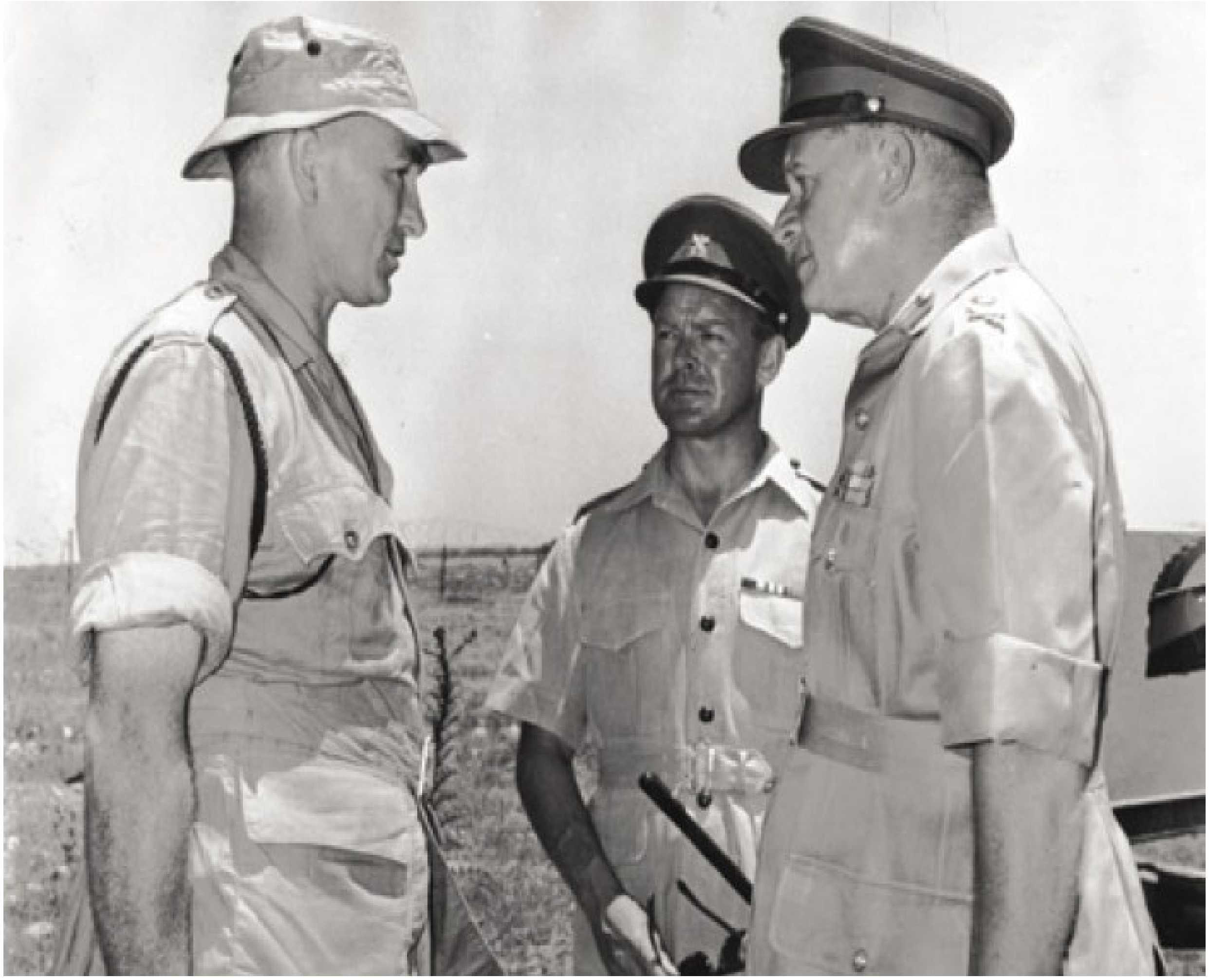
Kuwait City
Wadi Al-Batin
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
Persian/Arabian Gulf
BAHRAIN
QATAR
200 KM

Brigadier W. C. W. (Charles) Sloan CBE inspecting B Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers, on Nunshigum Day, April 1971. He is accompanied – as is traditional – by the Squadron Sergeant-Major (WO2, later Major John Tyson), with the regiment's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. (Tony) Bateman, following. Charles Sloan commanded the regiment 1955–58 and was Colonel 1966–71.

In July 1962, the regiment moved back to BAOR, to Lothian Barracks in Detmold, where it took over from the Royal Scots Greys but left B Squadron in Warminster until the end of the year. The years 1963 and 1964 were periods of routine in BAOR for the regiment but on 26 May 1965 it formed part of a massed mounted parade before HM The Queen on the great training ground at Sennelager during the Queen's state visit to Germany. This was the first mounted parade in which the regiment had participated since the Victory parade in Delhi in 1946. The 3rd Carabiniers remained in Detmold until 1967 as one of three armoured regiments in 20th Armoured Brigade. By 1967 it was still equipped with the ageing Centurion tank and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel, later Major General, H. S. L. (Harry) Dalzell-Payne. In the autumn of 1967 the regiment converted from tanks to armoured cars in the armoured reconnaissance role and moved to Chester, in the heart of its recruiting area of Cheshire and the seven counties of North Wales.

Regimental Headquarters and one sabre squadron remained based in The Dale Barracks in Chester until 1969. In 1967, B Squadron assisted the civil power in dealing with an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among cattle. During the period 1967–69 the two remaining sabre squadrons were based at Pergamos Camp in Cyprus and at El Adem in Libya. The operational role of the squadron based in Libya was to guard the RAF station at El Adem and to maintain a presence in Tobruk, where King Idris had his palace. Phase two of the army cuts having been continued by the Labour governments of 1963 and 1966, it was announced on 20 February 1969 that the regiment would amalgamate with the Royal Scots Greys (2nd Dragoons) in 1971. In the autumn of 1969, the regiment returned to BAOR, to York Barracks in

Münster, and in June 1970 the 3rd Carabiniers moved to Harewood Barracks, Herford. Its role of armoured reconnaissance was retained, the regiment taking over Ferret scout cars armed with Vigilant guided missiles from the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards in Herford. The early days of ‘The Troubles’ in Northern Ireland necessitated the regiment being warned for duty in that province almost as soon as it had arrived in Herford but that duty never materialised and in September 1970 the regiment trained in Bavaria. By late 1970 much of the regiment’s attention was focused on the impending amalgamation. As part of the preparations for the merging of the two regiments, 140 of all ranks of the 3rd Carabiniers – at that time the best-recruited regiment in the Royal Armoured Corps – had to be posted elsewhere within the army, although the creation of an additional squadron, known as D Squadron and operating as a detached squadron, enabled more officers and men to be retained for the new regiment than would otherwise have been possible.



B Squadron leader, Major G. R. K. (Robin 'Ben') Lyon, and WO2 John Weeks of the Royal Signals Detachment, 3rd Carabiniers, talking to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Middle East Land Forces, Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Anderson KCB CBE DSO, Kuwait, September 1961.

The regiment has a long and distinguished polo history, dating back to at least 1902; the regimental museum has a photo of Lieutenant F. A. U. Pickering on a grey carrying a polo stick while in South Africa during the South African War.

In the 1920s the Royal Scots Greys played in Palestine, Egypt and India, shipping twenty ponies from Egypt to India, where 'all officers in the Regiment took to polo'. The Scots Greys first won the Inter-Regimental Cup in 1933 by beating the Bays 6-4 at Hurlingham; the team consisted of Massey Lopes, Roland Findlay, Humphrey Guinness and Cyril Gaisford-St Lawrence. They won it again in 1938 at Hurlingham, beating 12th Lancers 10-8; Harry Mackeson replaced Gaisford-St Lawrence but otherwise the team was unchanged. The Colonel-in-Chief, HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught, presented the cup to Humphrey Guinness; it proved to be the prince's last public appearance before his death. He had served in the regiment from 1907 to 1914, and was made Colonel-in-Chief in 1921. At his funeral in Windsor the regiment provided the firing party, band and guard of honour.

Lieutenant F. A. U. Pickering, 2nd Dragoons, in South Africa, 1902. Lieutenant-Colonel Pickering was awarded the DSO during the First World War and was killed in action commanding 9th Battalion, the Rifle Brigade, in December 1917.

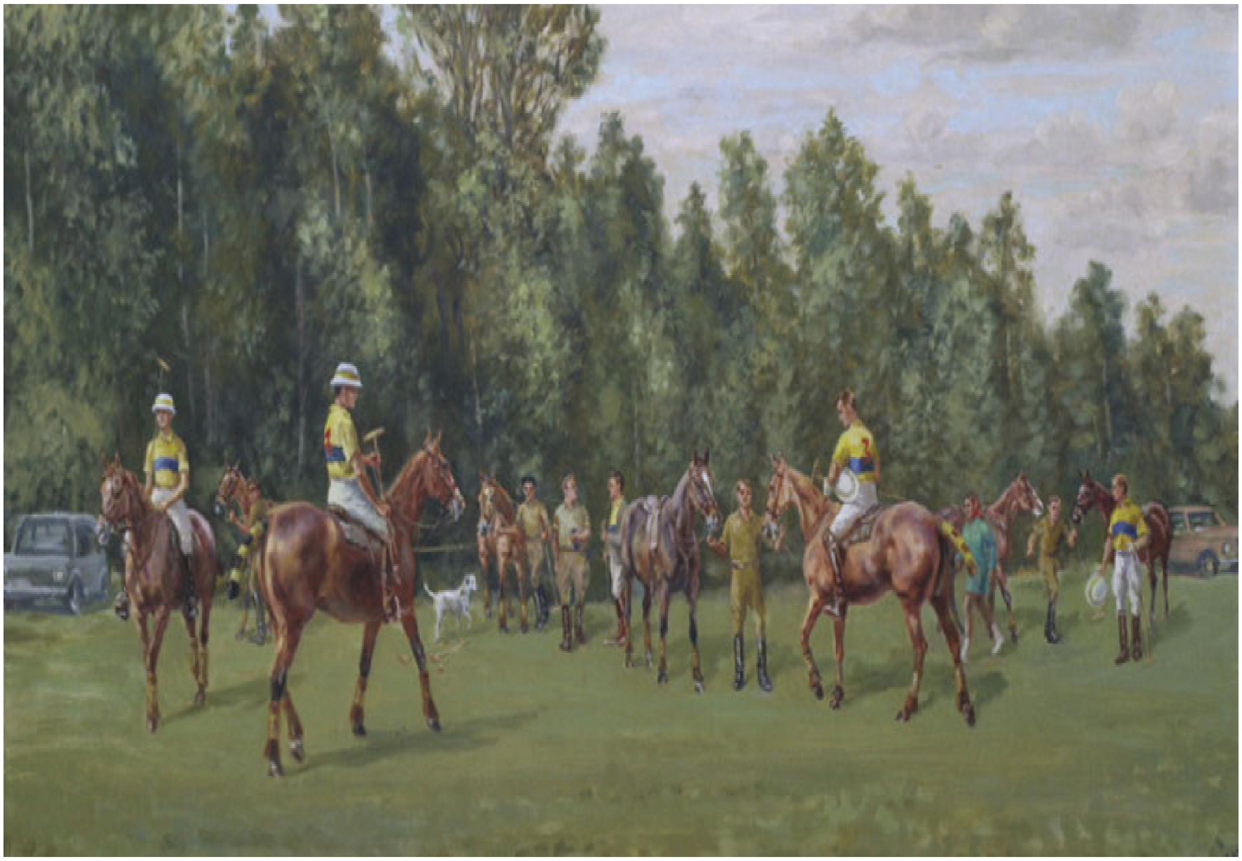
At the more junior officer level, the Greys won the Captains' and Subalterns' Cup in 1931, 1932, 1934 and 1935. In the ten-year period after the war the Greys played in Germany, Libya and England. Circumstances often made play difficult: Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Sprot wrote that in Libya after eventually persuading a farmer to loan them a field, they spent much time preparing it, only to find one morning (when arriving to stick and ball, or practise) that the farmer had already ploughed over half of it.

The 3rd Carabiniers played in India 1937–39. They had over one hundred ponies, and every officer played each morning before going to the new tank park, but they 'could only muster a 4 goal team'! The Feather and Carbine 1953 polo report talks of 'the pace and strain of the training season' making polo difficult, resulting in a concluding sentence stating that 'our withdrawal from the polo world seems sadly certain'; these words could have been from the 21st century. Nevertheless, through the 1960s a resurgence of enthusiasm culminated in a strong team, which won the Inter-Regimental in Germany in 1967, then the Captains' and Subalterns' in 1968, the team being selected from Mike Whitfield, Richard Bower, Sean Mahony, Roland Notley and Peter Fishbourne. They won the Inter-Regimental in England for the first time ever in 1969, as well as the United Services Cup (again for the first time), finishing the season by winning the Captains' and Subalterns'.

The amalgamated regiment first won the Inter-Regimental Cup three weeks before the 1971 amalgamation, with a team consisting of Mike Whitfield, Charles Ramsay, Sean Mahony and Luke Borwick. The regiment also won the United Services Cup (winner of BAOR Inter-Regimental against winner of UK Inter-Regimental) that year. From 1972 to 1986 the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards won the Inter-Regimental

eight times, the United Services Cup five times and every year the team changed due to postings and career planning. At the Captains' and Subalterns' level, the amalgamated regiment last won it in 1986.

Humphrey Guinness was by far the best player in either regiment: his handicap was nine goals and he played in the British team in the 1936 Olympics (the only Olympics with polo). Players who have represented the Army and/or Combined Services include Sean Mahony (4 goals: 1972–1993), Roland Notley (3: 1969–1983), Roger Horne (3: 1980s), Charles Ramsay (2: 1970s), David Allfrey (2: 1986 and 1988), Tim Brown (0: 1991) Rupert Alers-Hankey (1: 1992 and 1993) and most recently Richard Boyle (1: 2006). At various times these players have represented the British Army in the USA, Kenya, Rhodesia, Italy, France, Morocco, India and New Zealand.



3rd Carabiniers, winners of the 1967 Inter-Regimental Trophy. Left to right: S. Mahony, P. Fishbourne, R. Bower (on foot), R. Notley, M. Whitfield. Oil on canvas by George Cattley (1896–1978).

Since the end of the Cold War, commitments to operations in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan have been such that polo has been increasingly difficult to fit in. Nevertheless, the regiment has had a team virtually every year playing on the German circuit, making the occasional foray into UK tournaments and maintaining today a nucleus of regimental ponies in order to continue keeping the cavalry spirit alive through polo.

William Ramsay

Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, winners of the 1971 United Services Cup, with the Colonel of the Regiment (Major General R. Younger). Left to right: C. Ramsay, A. Bateman, M. Whitfield, S. Mahony.

ROYAL SCOTS GREYS, 1946–70

As postwar demobilisations took their toll, the regiment settled down for the next seven years as one of the armoured units stationed in the north German plain against the possibility of a Soviet invasion. After a series of moves following the surrender of Germany in May 1945, the regiment found itself, in July 1946, at Lüneburg. To begin with, during 1947, the regiment was so reduced in strength that its organisation was trimmed to Headquarter Squadron and one sabre squadron.

In 1947 Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Younger DSO MC, who had commanded the 3rd Carabiniers 1943–44, became the regiment's Commanding Officer for a year. In the same year, the previous Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas Stewart DSO MC won both the King's Cup and the Prince of Wales Cup at the Olympia Horse Show, riding his German horse, Gnome. In 1948, Colonel Stewart, again astride Gnome, rode in the British three-day event team at the London Olympic Games. The regiment was represented in the equestrian events of the first five postwar Olympic Games, winning two gold medals.

The postwar years in Germany required a great deal of bridge-building, in public relations terms, between the German civil population and the forces of occupation – which were only slowly changing from being occupiers of a defeated nation to becoming its defenders. The organisation of tattoos and other events, in which the well-known flair of the British Army for military spectacle could be demonstrated, aided the process and the regiment was able to contribute to a musical ride – with the eight performers from the Greys in full dress and mounted on greys – performed at the Berlin Tattoo of August 1947.

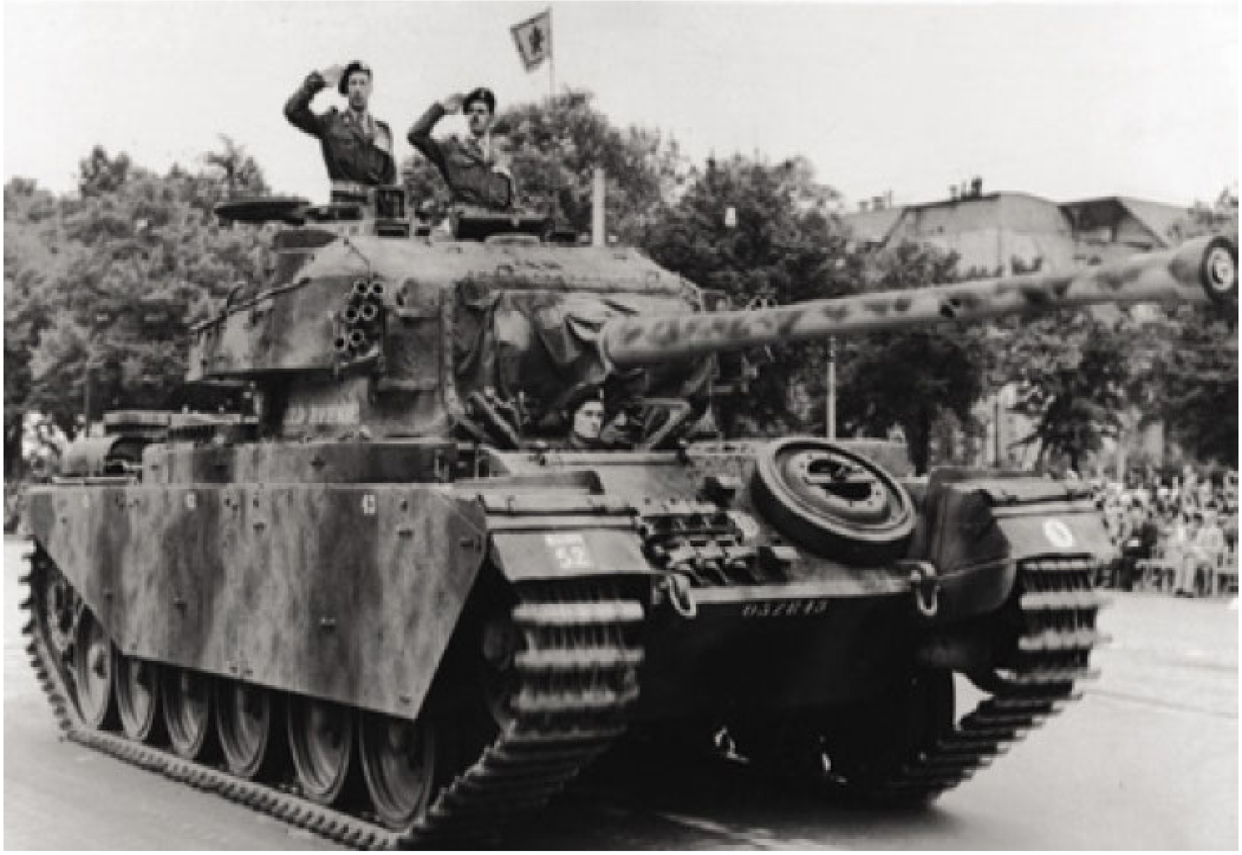
In addition to its equestrian excellence, demonstrated at BAOR horse shows, at Royal Tournaments and at Olympic Games in the years immediately after the Second World War, the regiment also managed to establish at that time something that has become, in terms of its public face, one of the best-known aspects of the Greys and its successor regiment: the Pipes and Drums, known at the time as the Pipe Band. A small pipe band had existed in pre-war years in India but its existence was unofficial. In the spring of 1946, as demobilisations considerably reduced the strength of the Lothians and Border Horse, a Scottish yeomanry regiment, its Pipes and Drums were transferred to join the existing Pipes and Drums of the Reconnaissance Regiment of 52nd Lowland Division and the combined Pipes and Drums of that division participated widely in the large number of Victory parades that took place, in Britain and on the European continent, until the autumn of 1946. By October 1946, it seemed clear that the postwar reduction in the Territorial Army would place the Lothians and Border Horse in suspended animation, so its Pipes and Drums were again transferred, to the Royal Scots Greys in Lüneburg. By early 1947, the regiment's Pipes and Drums were established, along with the Regimental (or Military) Band, as representing the music of the Royal Scots Greys and recognised as such by the War Office. King George VI, the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief from 1939 until his death in 1952, assisted considerably with its image and granted the pipers the right to wear Dress Royal Stewart tartan. In 1951, although the official establishment of the Pipes and Drums was a mere six pipers, there were actually a pipe major, eight pipers, four side-drummers and a bass-drummer on the strength. By 1954 the Pipes and Drums were so accomplished that they appeared on parade in Full Dress alongside the Regimental Band for the visit of the Queen to Tobruk, where the regiment was stationed at that time. In 1955, with their strength at eighteen, the Pipes and Drums made their first television appearance, at the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) Tattoo at White City Stadium in London. In 1956 they first appeared at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

The regimental football team, the Royal Scots Greys, winners of the Cavalry Cup 1950. Having reached the final of the cup four times by 1950, this was the first time that the regimental team had won. The captain, Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant Dickson – who had been in the team for fifteen years and had played in all four finals – is in the centre of the front row.

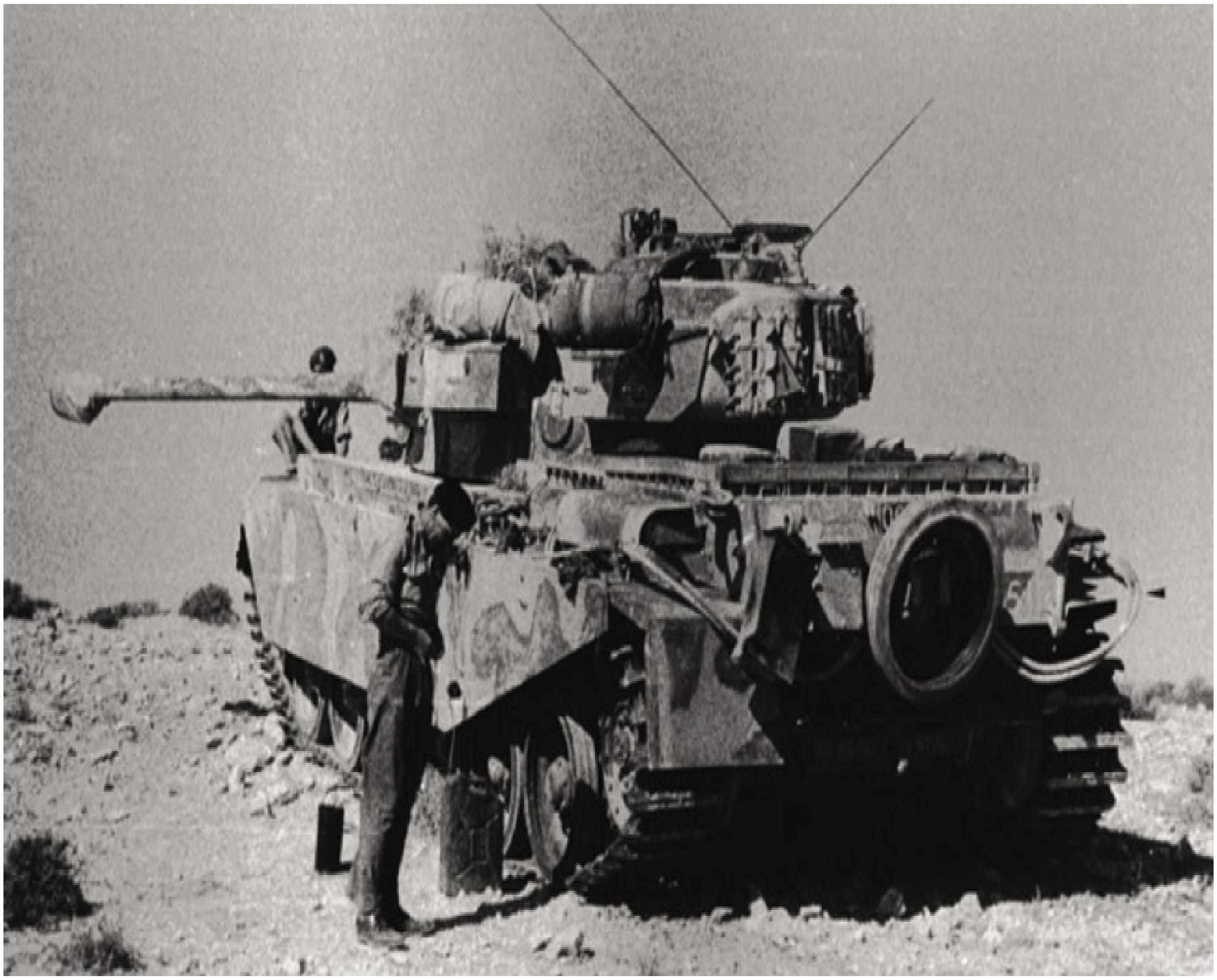
Having received Centurion Mk III tanks in 1950, the regiment remained at Lüneburg until 1952 when, in April that year and after a short period at Aldershot, it was posted to Barce in Cyrenaica (now the eastern half of Libya), its reconnaissance troop being equipped with Daimler ‘Dingo’ scout cars. Training in Libya was available to Britain until 1971, two years after the Libyan monarchy of King Idris was replaced by a republican government following an army officers’ coup led by Muammar al-Gaddafi. Britain’s commitments at that time in North Africa and the Middle East, described above, made it necessary for some time to have armoured regiments not only trained to serve in desert conditions but also present in those areas in case of emergencies. The regiment disembarked at Tobruk in early May 1952 and moved to its station at Barce, 56 miles north-east of Benghazi. Over the next two years its three sabre squadrons were detached in turn to serve in either the Suez Canal zone or in Jordan, as political situations demanded, but contingents were sent back to Britain to march in the Coronation procession in London on 2 June 1953 and to provide a mounted escort for the Queen on her first visit as sovereign to Edinburgh later in the month.

XIV OLYMPIAD
LONDON
1948

Prizes for Olympic horsemanship awarded to Lieutenant-Colonel D. N. Stewart DSO MC: a pair of gold spurs given to members of the British showjumping team following their victory at the Helsinki Olympic Games, 1952; left, the British Horse Society's Medal of Honour, 1948; middle, the Bronze medal for the London Olympic Games, 1948, won by Stewart for the three-day event at Aldershot on Dark Seal; right, the Gold medal for the Helsinki Olympic Games, 1952, won by Stewart as part of the British showjumping team on Aherlow.



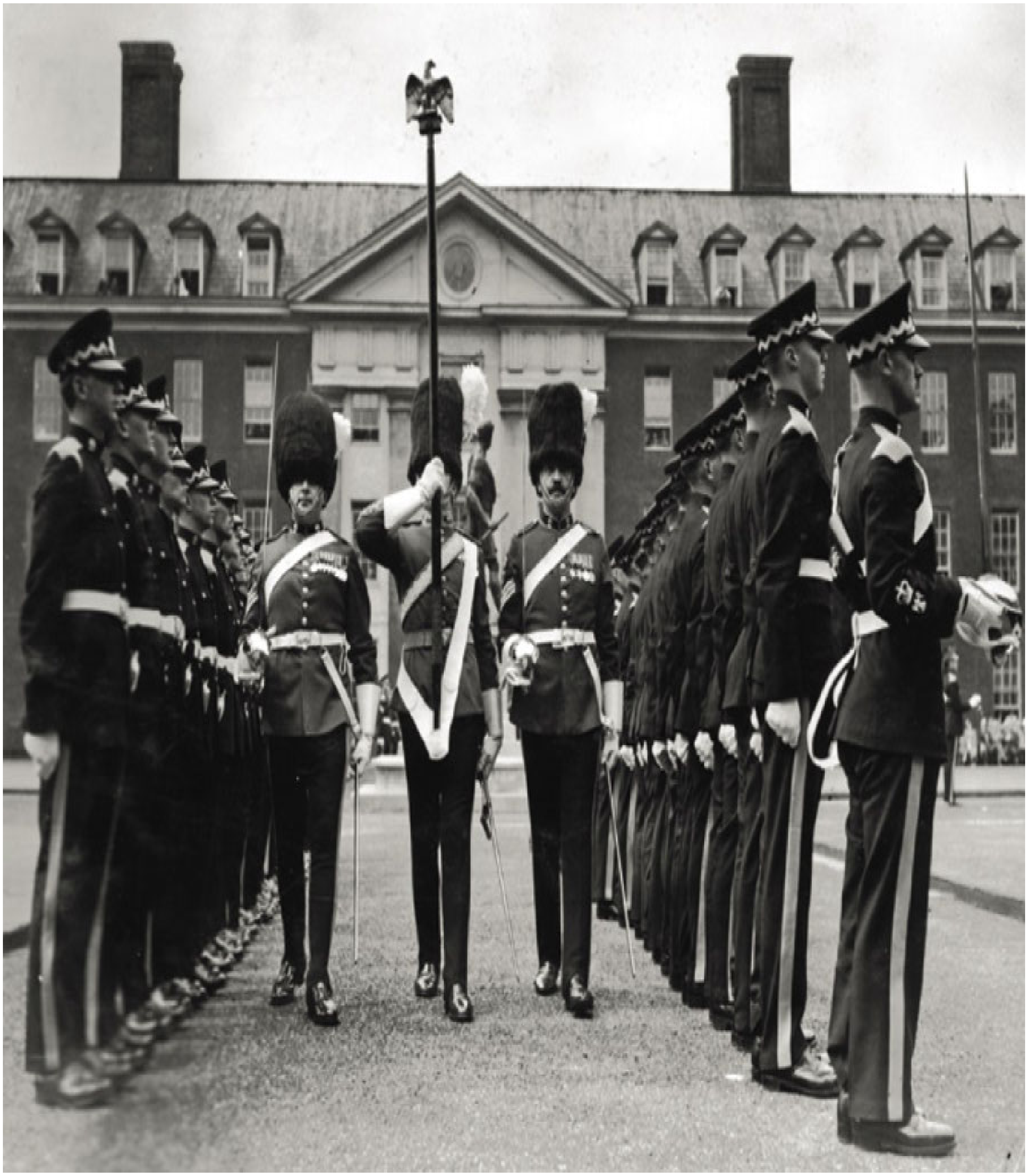
The Centurion tank of the Commanding Officer, the Royal Scots Greys, during the King's Birthday Parade, Hamburg, 7 June 1951. The tank is shown flying the Commanding Officer's standard – the Royal Arms of Scotland – and showing above the turret are Lieutenant-Colonel D. N. Stewart DSO MC, and the Adjutant, Captain K. T. W. Baker.



A Centurion tank of the Royal Scots Greys during desert training at Wadi Kuf, near Barce in Libya, summer 1953.

The Queen became Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Scots Greys on 1 June 1953 and first visited the regiment in that role during her state visit to Libya in 1954; the dispersed squadrons were all able to be present at Tobruk for the royal review. On 31 October 1954, officers and men of the regiment, together with the ropes and recovery vehicles of the Light Aid Detachment, helped rescue Libyans badly affected by sudden flash flooding at Barce. The Greys left Barce in 1955 and returned to Britain, handing over their tanks to 5th Royal Tank Regiment. On arrival in England the Greys' squadrons were dispersed: A Squadron to Tilshead in Wiltshire, B Squadron to Castlemartin in Pembrokeshire, C Squadron to Lulworth in Dorset and HQ Squadron to Crookham in Hampshire. The function of the dispersed squadrons was to conduct training camps and provide the support of regular soldiers for yeomanry and other Territorial Army units; this continued until 1956 when the Greys moved to Catterick in Yorkshire.

In 1956 two important ceremonies were held, one in London and the other in Edinburgh; both involved two items most significant to the Greys because of their inextricable associations with the regiment's history and traditions. On 18 June 1956 – the 141st anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo – the Greys received back from the safekeeping of the Governor of the Royal Hospital Chelsea the eagle and standard of the French 45th Infantry that Sergeant, later Ensign, Charles Ewart had taken at the battle. On 5 July, the Queen presented the regiment with a new guidon at the Palace of Holyroodhouse during her annual visit to Edinburgh. On 7 July 1956, the eagle and standard were handed over, on loan, to the safekeeping of the Scottish United Services Museum (now the National War Museum of Scotland) at a ceremony on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, opposite the tomb in which Ensign Ewart's remains are buried. The eagle and standard were returned to the regimental museum in 1995 and are still on display there.



The return of the French eagle from the Royal Hospital Chelsea to the Royal Scots Greys, 18 June (Waterloo Day) 1956. The eagle was carried by the Regimental Sergeant-Major (later Major) W. J. ('Bill') Haynes,

escorted by Squadron Quartermaster Sergeants Gill (on the RSM's right) and Braine.

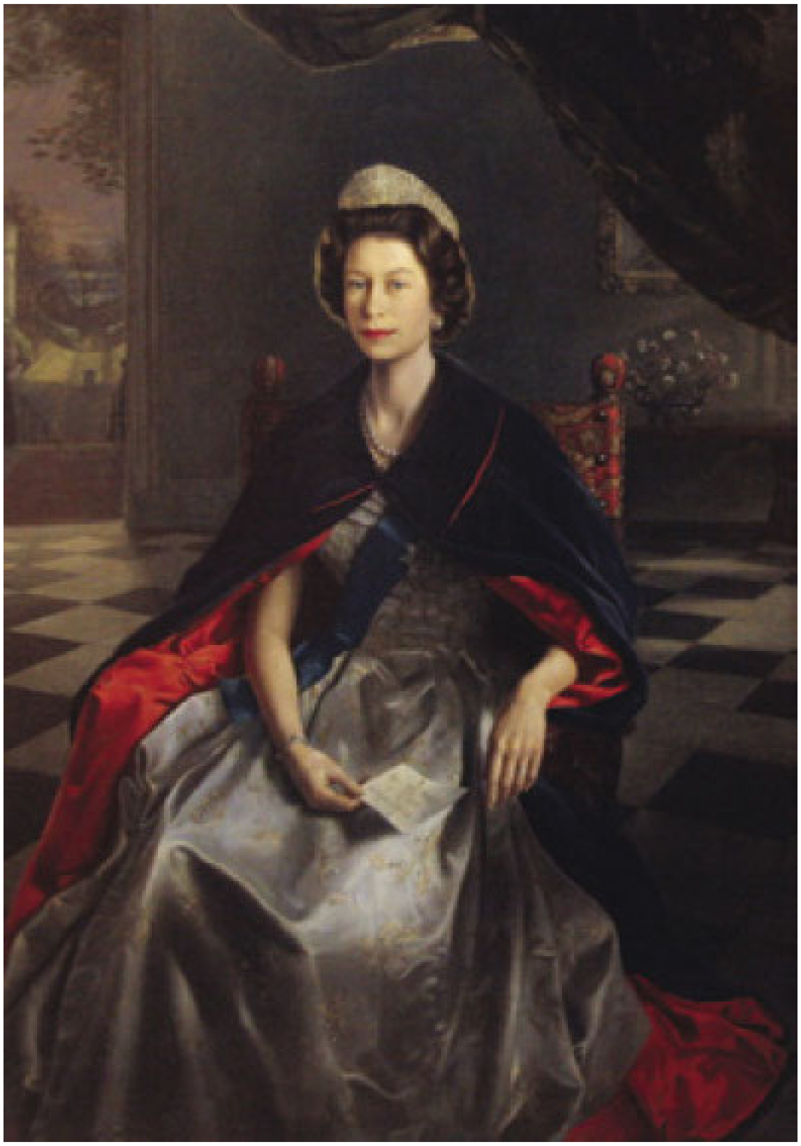
The portrait of HM Queen Elizabeth II, Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Scots Greys, was completed in 1964.

Douglas Anderson was born in 1934 in Ayrshire. He was twelve when his first painting was exhibited at a London gallery. He studied portraiture at Annigoni's studio in Florence and was elected to the Royal Society of Portrait Painters at the age of twenty-seven.

For this work Anderson designed the red-lined blue cape, suggesting the Greys' officers' Full Dress cloak. Made by Sir Norman Hartnell, it was later presented to Her Majesty by the artist and the regiment. Through the open window can be seen the garden of The Binns, the seat of Lieutenant-General Thomas Dalyell who raised the Scots Greys in 1678 and whose descendant Sir Thomas Dalyell Loch (Tam Dalyell, the former MP for Linlithgow) served as a national service trooper in the Greys from 1950 to 1952.

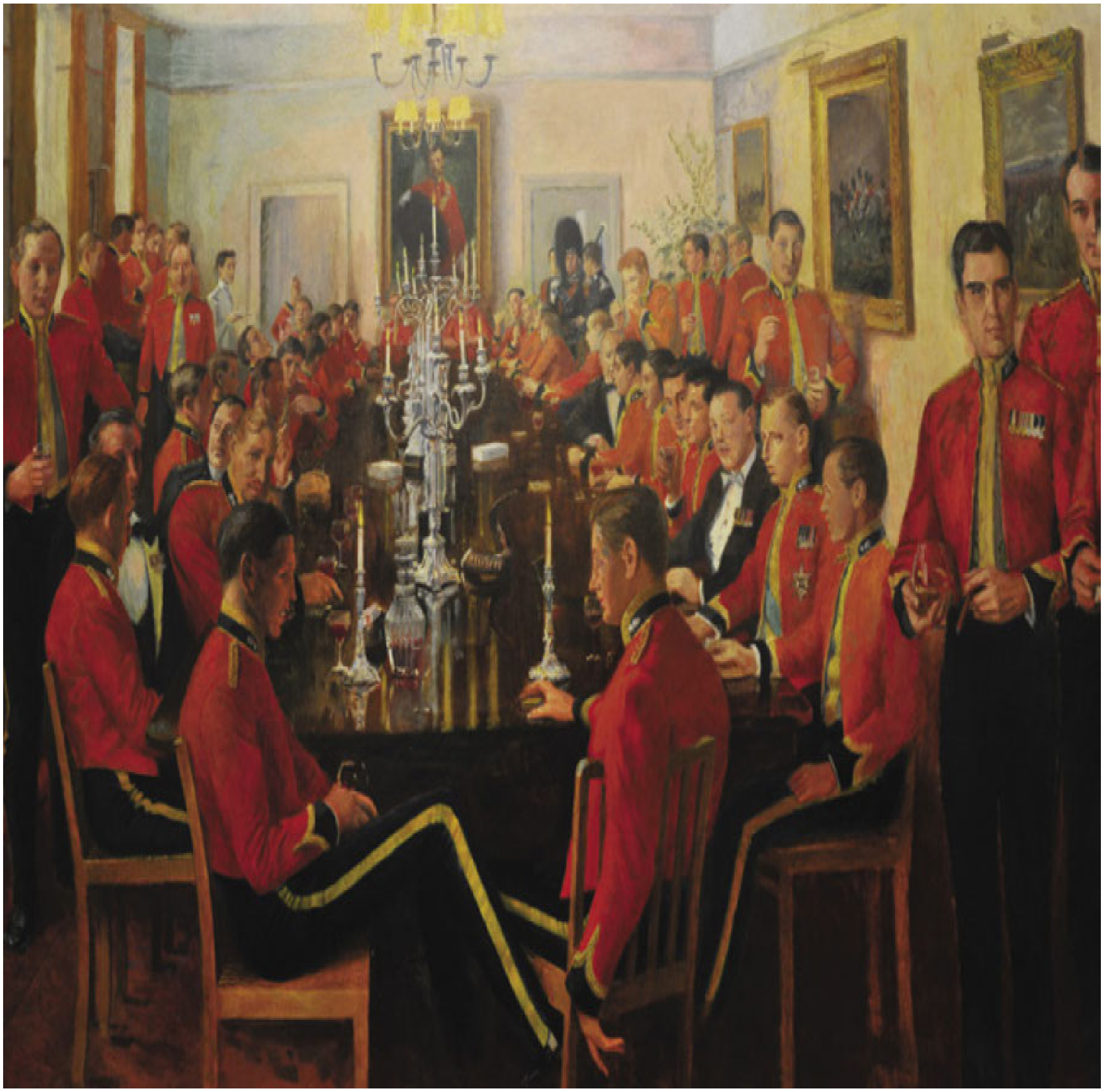
In her hand the Queen holds an invitation to a ball, held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo (the artist blamed the spelling mistake on his dyslexia).

Bruce Ridge



The regiment remained at Catterick during 1957 and 1958, training recruits for the Royal Armoured Corps, before moving to Münster in BAOR in October 1958 at the end of that tour of duty. After arrival in Germany, recruiting in Scotland was increased, it having been a matter of concern for some years in the regiment that so few recruits were Scottish. Recruiting parties operated in Scotland in 1959, 1960 and 1961 and secured about 100 recruits in each year; the tour in 1961 was accompanied by a Centurion tank and received positive press coverage. As national service ended, so the Royal Scots Greys became the first regiment in the army to achieve an establishment formed entirely of regular soldiers. From 1960 until 1962, the regiment was stationed at Lothian Barracks in Detmold; when it left, it handed over the barracks to the 3rd Carabiniers.

Leaving Germany in July 1962, the regiment was again dispersed by squadrons. After spending a fortnight in Edinburgh in July, preparing for service in the Middle and Far East, the regiment moved to Aden. While C Squadron joined 48th Gurkha Infantry Brigade in Hong Kong, each of the remaining two sabre squadrons spent rotating tours of duty either at Aden or at Bahrain or afloat in the Persian Gulf as part of the Amphibious Warfare Squadron of the Royal Navy. In the latter operational role, the duty squadron was ready for the type of local emergency that had involved the 3rd Carabiniers in Kuwait in 1961. Between September and December 1962 the Pipes and Drums and Regimental Band paid a visit to North America, in company with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders' Band and Pipes and Drums, and played in sixty-five cities in seventy-eight days in both the United States and Canada.



The officers of the Royal Scots Greys at dinner in Fallingbostel on the 150th anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, 1965; oil on canvas by Robin Guthrie.

In February 1964, the Greys returned to north Germany, to the vast training area at Fallingbostel between Hamburg and Hanover, and remained stationed there until November 1969. In 1965 the regiment won the Canadian Army

Trophy for tank gunnery. In the same year, while at Fallingbostel, it acquired an ‘air troop’ of three helicopters – further evidence of the regiment’s capacity to adapt to changing battlefield roles as required. In June 1965 the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo was celebrated in Germany, Belgium and in London. Principal regimental celebrations were held in Brussels and on the battlefield of Waterloo itself, with four days of sports, games, balls and dinners being held at Fallingbostel.

John Stanier was born in 1925 and educated at Marlborough during the war. He was called up in April 1944 and posted to Merton College, Oxford, on a six-month university short course. He was allocated to the Royal Armoured Corps and commissioned into the 7th Hussars, then in northern Italy, and later at Soltau in northern Germany.

After national service, Stanier obtained a regular commission in the 7th Hussars. In 1955 he married Cicely Lambert, and went to Staff College early in 1957. From there he became the Military Assistant to the Vice Chief of the General Staff, after which he was appointed MBE.

Following a tour as an instructor at the Staff College he took command of the Royal Scots Greys, for whom his insistence on absolute perfection produced levels of efficiency which made the regiment the envy of the Royal Armoured Corps. As Commanding Officer in 1967, Stanier supervised the temporary move of Ensign Ewart’s remains from the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, an operation made necessary by the rebuilding of one of the walls. While the work was in progress, Ewart’s remains rested in the vault of the Callander family at Prestonhall, south of Edinburgh, several members of that family having served as officers in the regiment; the remains were reburied on the esplanade in 1968.

After attending the Imperial Defence College, Stanier commanded 20th Armoured Brigade, and in 1972 became Director Public Relations, taking office the day after ‘Bloody Sunday’. It was a role in which he was an outstanding success. On occasions he could speak for forty-five minutes without notes and handle questions with aplomb. His book War and the Media was published in 1997.

In 1973 Stanier took command of the 1st Armoured Division in Germany. His next appointment was as Commandant of the Staff College, during which he led the first exchange visit to the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow. Promotion to lieutenant-general and appointment as KCB came in 1978, as the Vice Chief of the General Staff. He became Colonel of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards in 1979 and Colonel Commandant of the Royal Armoured Corps in 1982.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Stanier MBE inspecting the Scots Greys at his farewell parade.

His achievements as Vice Chief of the General Staff included the restoration of the brigade system, the procurement of the Challenger tank and the deployment of British troops to Rhodesia in 1980. In 1981 he assumed his final command appointment as Commander-in-Chief UK Land Forces, playing a leading part in the planning of the Falklands War. Soon afterwards he became the first officer with no experience of active service to be appointed Chief of the General Staff and was made GCB; his field marshal's baton followed in 1985.

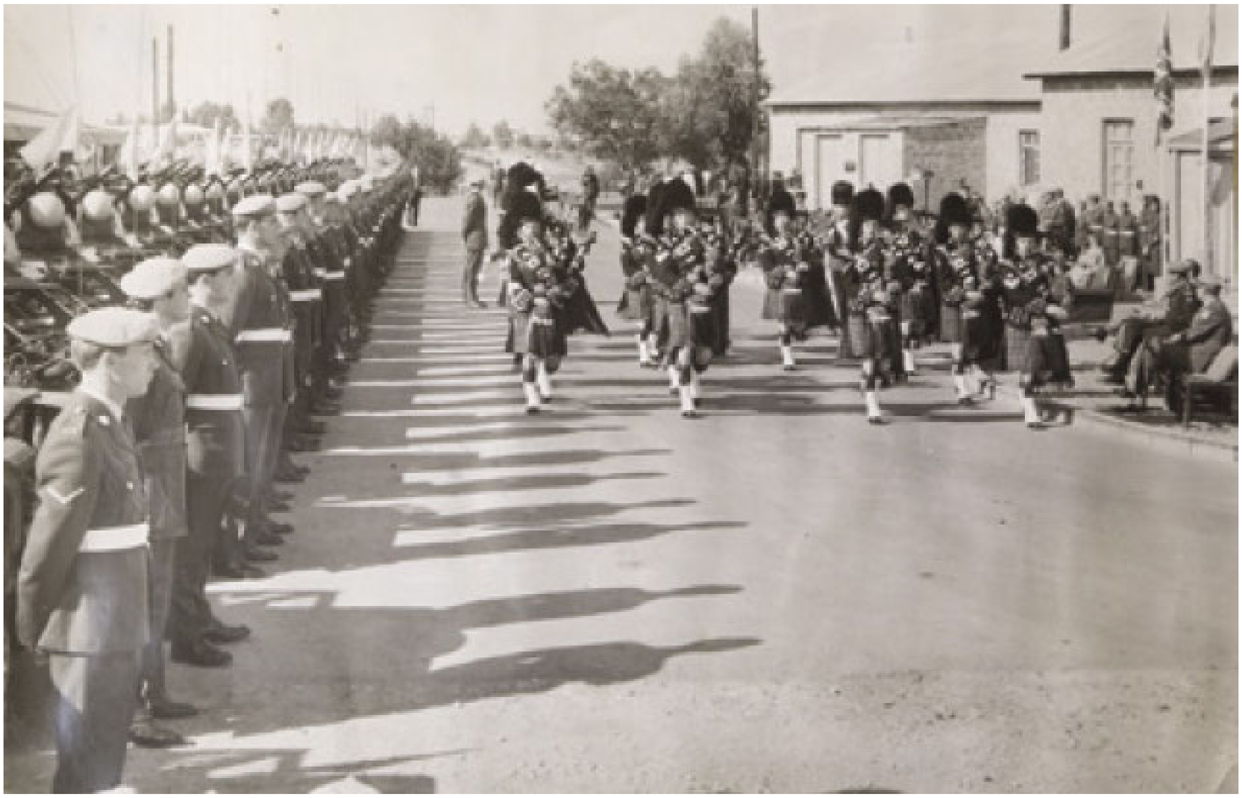
Transferred to half pay, he was chairman of the Royal United Services Institute (1986–89), Constable of the Tower of London (1990–96), President of the Hampshire Red Cross and a Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire. He died in November 2007. His field marshal's uniform, kindly presented by Lady Stanier, is in the regimental museum.

In July 2012, several years of hard campaigning and fundraising culminated in a well-attended ceremony at Sandhurst, when a stained-glass window commemorating Stanier was unveiled in the Royal Memorial Chapel.

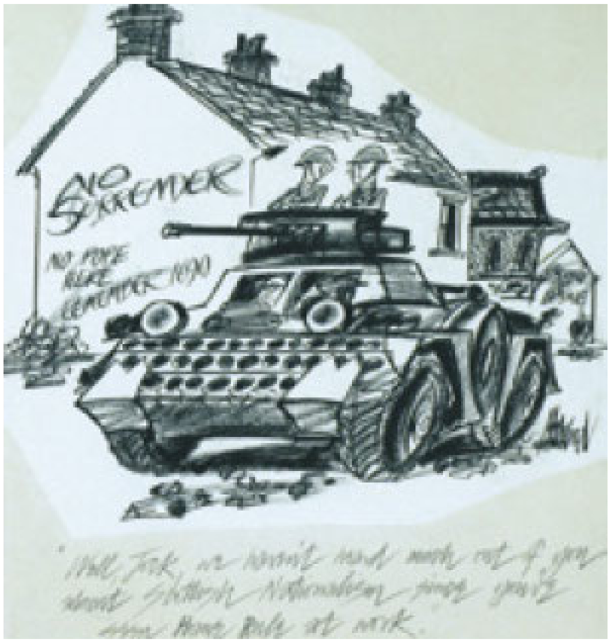
Charles Webb

PIETATE
FORTIOR
WATERLOO
STANIER

The stained-glass window installed in memory of Field Marshal Sir John Stanier GCB MBE DL (1925–2007) at the Royal Memorial Chapel, RMA Sandhurst. (Peter Franklin)



C Squadron, the Royal Scots Greys, parading in Cyprus to receive their United Nations medals for peacekeeping service in the island, 1970.


NO SURRENDER
NO POPE HERE
REMEMBER 1690
"Well Jock, we haven't heard much out of you about Scottish Nationalism since you've seen Home Rule at work."

A cartoon commenting on Scottish nationalism in the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, c. 1970; by Kenneth Mahood.

The late 1960s were years of considerable disquiet for the regiment and for the army as a whole. Publication of a Defence White Paper in 1967 served to underline the unchanging nature of successive governments' commitment to reductions in defence expenditure, which had begun in the late 1950s; for some time the regiment's fate was uncertain. During 1967 it seemed likely that the regiment would be amalgamated with its fellow remaining unamalgamated dragoon regiment, 1st (Royal) Dragoons, but this did not occur and, instead, the Royals amalgamated in 1969 with the Royal Horse Guards (The Blues) to form The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons). By continuing and increasing the defence cuts of the 1950s, the Labour governments of the 1960s were committing themselves to a complete withdrawal from points east of Suez and from the Gulf region by the early 1970s. Although at that time little likelihood was foreseen of Britain being involved in armoured desert warfare, C and B Squadrons of the regiment trained in Libya in 1965 and 1966 respectively and were followed there for the same purpose by A Squadron in 1968 – the wide, open spaces of the Libyan desert offering the terrain and freedom needed to exercise armour with as few restrictions on movement and live-firing as possible.

The escape from amalgamation in 1967 was only a delay of the inevitable, however, and in February 1969 it became known that the Greys would amalgamate two years later with the 3rd Carabiniers. In the intervening two years, however, the regiment was active in new roles and locations. In November 1969 the regiment moved from Fallingbostel to Edinburgh, returning to Scotland for the first time in thirty years, and converted from tanks to armoured cars and scout cars, becoming an armoured reconnaissance regiment with an air-portable function. The regiment's troop of helicopters, which it had possessed since 1965, was expanded to become a squadron with six helicopters, and during the eighteen-month home tour the Greys were to send their other squadrons to a number of differing locations, each of which characterised the regiment's new role and reinforced the regiment's commitment to adaptability.

At the end of 1969, B Squadron – its conversion to Ferret scout cars complete – left Britain to join a United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus, based initially at Zyyi Camp, between Larnaca and Limassol, but subsequently in Nicosia. By early 1970, C Squadron had completed its conversion to Ferrets, a change which involved the squadron also training for service in the airportable role, and A Squadron had finished converting to Saladin armoured cars. A and C Squadrons remained in Scotland, stationed at Redford Cavalry Barracks south of Edinburgh, and suffered a prolonged winter, during which training took place at Otterburn in Northumberland. B Squadron remained in Cyprus until June 1970 and was relieved by C Squadron. A Squadron moved to Sharjah in the Persian Gulf in July, where it collaborated in exercises with the Scots Guards and Trucial Oman Scouts. On 6 July 1970, B Squadron was ordered to Belfast at three days' notice but spent only ten days in what was becoming one of Britain's newest trouble spots before being recalled. C Squadron returned from Cyprus in December 1970 and went to Northern Ireland in February 1971, spending a month in the province before returning to Scotland; at that time, C Squadron was commanded by HRH The Duke of Kent. 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland were periodically to require the deployment of part or all of the regiment to that province until 1980.

Although operational and training duties continued, the thoughts of most of the regiment must have been on the ceremonies of amalgamation, which were to take place in July 1971.

BLENHEIM
OUDENARDE
DETTINGEN
WILLEMS
BALAKLAVA
RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY
RAMILLIES
MALPLAQUET
WARBURG
WATERLOO
SEVASTOPOL
PAARDEBERG
NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT
SECOND TO NONE
II.D.
II.D.
SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902

The last guidon of the Royal Scots Greys, marched off parade at the amalgamation ceremony in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh, 2 July 1971. The side shown bears the battle honours awarded before 1905; those awarded after 1905 were borne on the other side.

After the war, Battledress remained the everyday uniform for the army. However, the contingents that paraded for the Coronation in 1953 wore a version of the blue frock, officially known as No. 1 Dress since 1945. This became the official formal uniform and was issued to regular soldiers, but not normally to national servicemen. For cavalry officers, No. 1 Dress was worn with a gold-laced shoulder-belt, silver pouch and white gloves, as previously worn in Full Dress. The sword was carried in a plated scabbard, attached by laced slings to a webbing belt under the jacket. Officers wore overalls, wellingtons and box-spurs, while other ranks had trousers and standard-issue ammunition boots.

In the 1950s, an olive-green Combat Dress jacket and trousers were introduced for operations and exercises, while Battledress remained the standard uniform in barracks.

In this decade, Mess Dress was revived. The 3rd Carabiniers chose the upright collar style that had been abolished in 1902. The jacket was blue, with a yellow cloth collar and cuffs, both edged with gold lace, and a gold-braided scarlet waistcoat. The overalls bore the double white stripe. The Greys initially resumed their pre-war roll collar pattern, but in the early 1960s changed to a pre-1902-style scarlet jacket edged with gold braid. The blue collar and cuffs were trimmed with gold lace. The waistcoat was grey, also edged with lace, and with large embroidered thistles in the bottom corners.

At the same time, Mess Dress was also adopted by the warrant officers and sergeants of both regiments. This was a scarlet jacket with roll collar and cuffs, both in the respective facing colour, and was worn with overalls, wellington or george boots, and spurs.

With the end of national service in the early 1960s, Service Dress, now known as No. 2 Dress, was issued to non-commissioned ranks, the soldiers' version being similar in style and material to that of the officers. As a result, No. 1 Dress ceased to be a universal issue, and although officers and senior NCOs contrived to retain it, No. 2 Dress was thereafter normally worn for formal parades.

Despite the fact that Full Dress had no official existence outside the Household Division and the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, it was nevertheless resumed by the bands of both the 3rd Carabiniers and the Greys, and was worn by small parties of officers and soldiers for guards of honour. Correct patterns were closely adhered to, and this was to prove of considerable assistance when new uniforms for the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards were under discussion in the months before amalgamation.

The forthcoming amalgamation of the 3rd Carabiniers and the Royal Scots Greys was announced early in 1969 and within a few months preliminary discussions on the title, badges and uniform of the new regiment were under way. It was agreed by both parties that, because Full Dress uniform, however notional, dictates so many of the other orders of dress, Full Dress should be the starting point for the negotiations.

Once the title of the regiment had been settled, the all-important decisions as regards the Full Dress were the headdress and the facing colour. Fortunately, apart from the facings, the scarlet Full Dress tunics of both regiments differed only in badges and minor details. As a 'Royal' regiment, the Scots Dragoon Guards might have been expected to wear blue velvet facings. However, an agreement was reached that the Greys' bearskin, complete with its white plume (and also for other ranks the silver Horse of Hanover), would be retained as the headdress in return for accepting the yellow facings (albeit in cloth rather than

velvet) of the 3rd Carabiniers. The kettledrummer's white bearskin with its scarlet plume was also retained.

For the officers, the collar-badge on the tunic was to be the embroidered silver grenade, worn by the Greys since the late 1820s, and the waist-belt, shoulder-belt and sword-knot were also to be of the very distinctive Greys pattern. A new badge, featuring the eagle superimposed on crossed carbines, was mounted on the silver flap of the pouch. The double yellow stripes on the overalls (and pantaloons when worn with butcher boots on mounted duties) were slightly wider than normal. The Full Dress tunics of other ranks were of the pattern that had hardly changed throughout the previous century, with yellow worsted-cord decoration on collars, sleeves, skirts and shoulder-straps. Badges of rank were in gold on yellow backing, and collar-badges on black cloth. White buff belts and black pouches, the latter now fitted with badges similar to those on the officers' pouches, were worn as in both former regiments.

With Full Dress agreed, it was relatively straightforward to design a suitable Mess Dress. For all ranks the jacket was scarlet with yellow cloth collar and cuffs. The officers' jacket had an upright collar and was edged all round with gold lace of thistle pattern. The pointed cuffs were also edged with the same lace. There were narrow plaited gold cords on the shoulders, bearing small badges of rank in silver embroidery. The waistcoat was yellow, also with a high collar and edging of gold lace piped with scarlet cloth. A row of gilt studs ran down the front, and the embroidered thistle in the bottom corners was smaller than the one previously worn on Greys' waistcoats. The warrant officers' and sergeants' jackets had roll collars and were without any gold lace other than the chevrons. They were worn with a white shirt, black bow tie and blue waistcoat. For all ranks the overalls were as prescribed for Full Dress, being worn with wellington or george boots and spurs, those of the officers being straight-necked.

The forage cap approved for No. 1 Dress was blue, with a yellow vandyke band and all officers now wore gold-embroidered edging on the peaks. The new cap-badge and collar-badge was the Napoleonic eagle of the Greys, superimposed on crossed carbines.

In No. 1 Dress, the Prince of Wales's plumes were now worn in silver embroidery on the left upper arm, on yellow backing for officers and blue for soldiers. No. 1 Dress was worn with a white waist-belt by other ranks and with gold-laced crossbelts and silver-flapped pouches by officers. While the Greys' pattern crossbelt and sword-slings were the official pattern, officers who owned other patterns from the antecedent regiments were permitted to retain them. Officers and senior ranks wore overalls and spurs as in Mess Dress, while soldiers wore trousers with the same double stripes. Officers' spurs were of the Greys' pattern, with unusually long swan-necks.

A standardised No. 2 Dress tunic in khaki whipcord had been approved for Royal Armoured Corps officers a few years previously, and this was adopted by the new regiment, with brown leather buttons and officers' badges of rank in worsted embroidery as previously worn by the Greys. The Prince of Wales's feathers, in silver embroidery for officers and drab worsted for other ranks, were worn on the left upper arm. The metal collar-badges were on black backing for all.

Although officers of both regiments had formerly worn Sam Browne belts, it was decided that in future all ranks would wear a brown leather crossbelt and pouch in No. 2 Dress. The officers' belts carried a whistle on a leather strap and had a brass buckle and tip. The soldiers' belts were slightly narrower, and also had brass fittings but no whistle. Officers' swords were carried in leather scabbards on matching slings attached to a webbing belt worn under the tunic. Their khaki Service Dress cap retained the Greys' black welt in the crown and black backing to the cap badge.

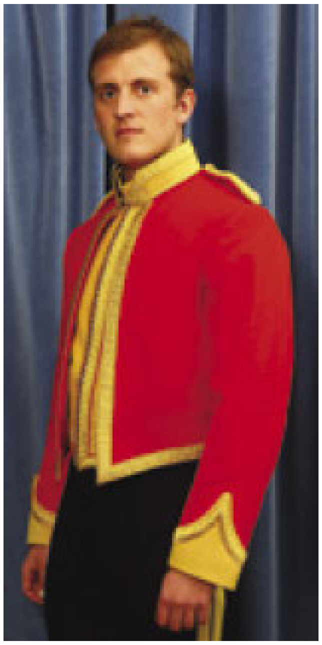
A blue-grey pullover was introduced for officers and senior ranks in barrack dress, and the 3rd Carabiniers' pattern stable belt was agreed for shirt-sleeve order.

The most contentious item of dress in the negotiations proved, not unexpectedly, to be the grey beret. This was rejected by the 3rd Carabiniers on the grounds that its adoption would indicate a complete takeover by the Greys. The Greys retaliated by refusing the very distinctive blue and yellow side cap of the 3rd Carabiniers. It was

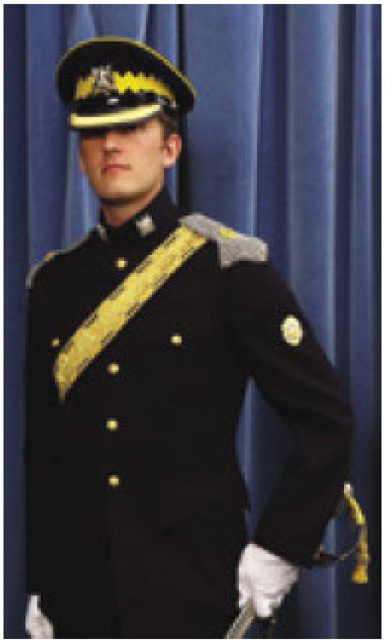
agreed that the matter of the grey beret would be reconsidered after five years.

Other than in combat orders of dress, there have been few changes to the uniform of the regiment since 1971, apart from the reintroduction of the grey beret in 1976. It is now worn by all ranks in combat or tank-park uniform, and in barrack dress and shirt-sleeve order by staff sergeants and below, while warrant officers wear a khaki peaked cap.

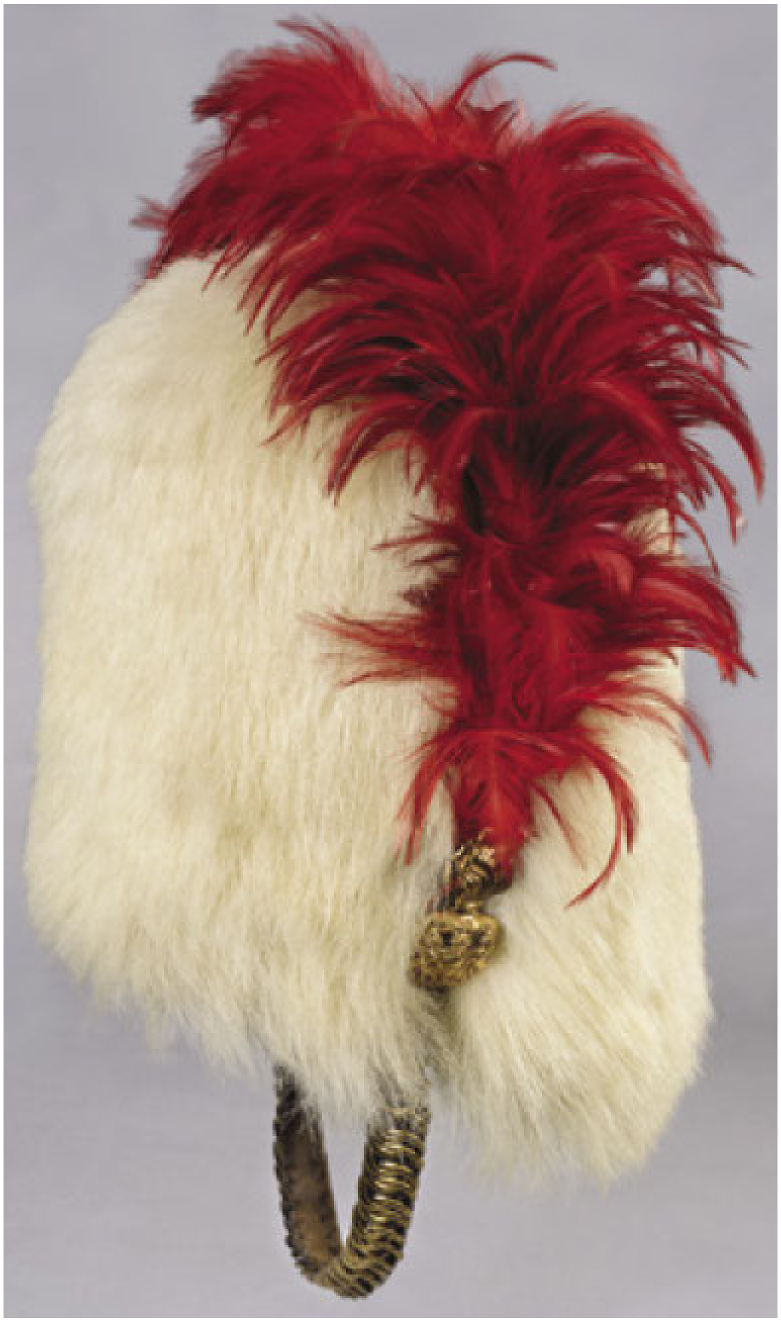
Charles Webb



Officer's Mess Dress, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, from 1971.



Officer’s No. 1 Dress, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, from 1971.



The bass-drummer's white bearskin cap, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, from 1971.

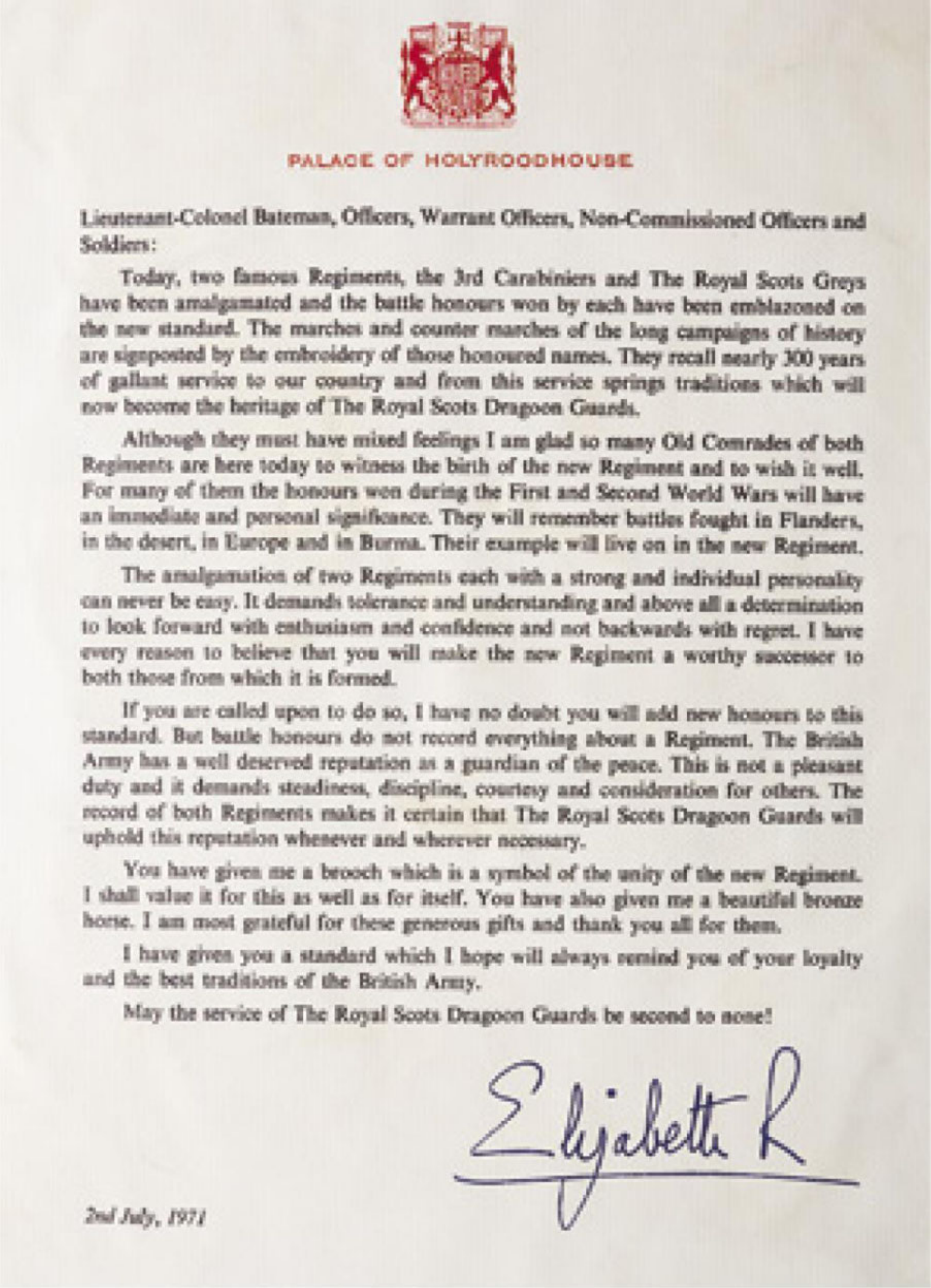
THE ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS (CARABINIERS AND GREYS), 1971–89

The year 1971 was one of frantic activity and great reward. All the battles that could be fought to attempt to prevent amalgamation had been fought several years before, principally outside the two regiments. While there was undoubted sadness, both at the disappearance of Britain's last unamalgamated cavalry regiment and at the further amalgamation of the 3rd Carabiniers, this sadness was – in the regiments at least – ameliorated by optimism for the future and a determination to make the amalgamation work.

At the time of the amalgamation, the 3rd Carabiniers and the Royal Scots Greys were the two best-recruited cavalry regiments, the 3rd Carabiniers particularly so, and this contributed to the strength of the new regiment. Both regiments had a deserved reputation for the high calibre of their recruits: it is said that by 1975 there were some ten warrant officers class 1 in the army who had served in one or other of the two regiments.

Both regiments' Colonels, Brigadier W. C. W. (Charles) Sloan CBE for the 3rd Carabiniers and Colonel A. G. J. ('Tim') Readman DSO for the Royal Scots Greys, were personal friends and forged a close and professional relationship early on in the process of negotiations, making clear to all ranks their determination that the amalgamation should work. Charles Sloan had joined the 3rd Carabiniers in 1934, served in the 25th Dragoons 1941–44, led the 3rd Carabiniers contingent at the Coronation of 1953 and commanded the regiment in Germany in 1955; he had become Colonel of the 3rd Carabiniers in 1966, in which position he was able to bring his considerable wisdom and experience into play in order to influence the amalgamation of 1971. Tim Readman, whose father – J. J. Readman DSO – had commanded the Greys 1925–28, had served with the Greys from 1934 to 1949 and had been the regiment's Colonel since January 1968; he had commanded the regiment in Italy and Normandy 1943–44, had been mentioned in despatches three times and was awarded the DSO in December 1944 in recognition of his leadership in Normandy in July and August that year. A five-year 'contract' was informally agreed between the two colonels:

this specified that nothing that had been agreed about the new regiment’s dress, customs, traditions, music or anniversaries was to be changed for five years following amalgamation. Of immense significance was the appointment of Major General Ralph Younger CB CBE DSO MC to be the first Colonel of the amalgamated regiment. Ralph Younger (1904–85) was a border Scot who had been educated in England; he had commanded the 3rd Carabiniers at Nunshigum and then commanded the Greys 1947–48. He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1954 and a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1957. He retired in 1958 as a major general, after commanding a number of formations in Britain and Germany, and was Colonel of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys) from 1971 until 1974. As a distinguished soldier familiar with both regiments and with an impressive service record he was an obvious and natural choice to be the new regiment’s first Colonel.



PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

Lieutenant-Colonel Bateman, Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers:

Today, two famous Regiments, the 3rd Carabiniers and The Royal Scots Greys have been amalgamated and the battle honours won by each have been emblazoned on the new standard. The marches and counter marches of the long campaigns of history are signposted by the embroidery of those honoured names. They recall nearly 300 years of gallant service to our country and from this service springs traditions which will now become the heritage of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

Although they must have mixed feelings I am glad so many Old Comrades of both Regiments are here today to witness the birth of the new Regiment and to wish it well. For many of them the honours won during the First and Second World Wars will have an immediate and personal significance. They will remember battles fought in Flanders, in the desert, in Europe and in Burma. Their example will live on in the new Regiment.

The amalgamation of two Regiments each with a strong and individual personality can never be easy. It demands tolerance and understanding and above all a determination to look forward with enthusiasm and confidence and not backwards with regret. I have every reason to believe that you will make the new Regiment a worthy successor to both those from which it is formed.

If you are called upon to do so, I have no doubt you will add new honours to this standard. But battle honours do not record everything about a Regiment. The British Army has a well deserved reputation as a guardian of the peace. This is not a pleasant duty and it demands steadiness, discipline, courtesy and consideration for others. The record of both Regiments makes it certain that The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards will uphold this reputation whenever and wherever necessary.

You have given me a brooch which is a symbol of the unity of the new Regiment. I shall value it for this as well as for itself. You have also given me a beautiful bronze horse. I am most grateful for these generous gifts and thank you all for them.

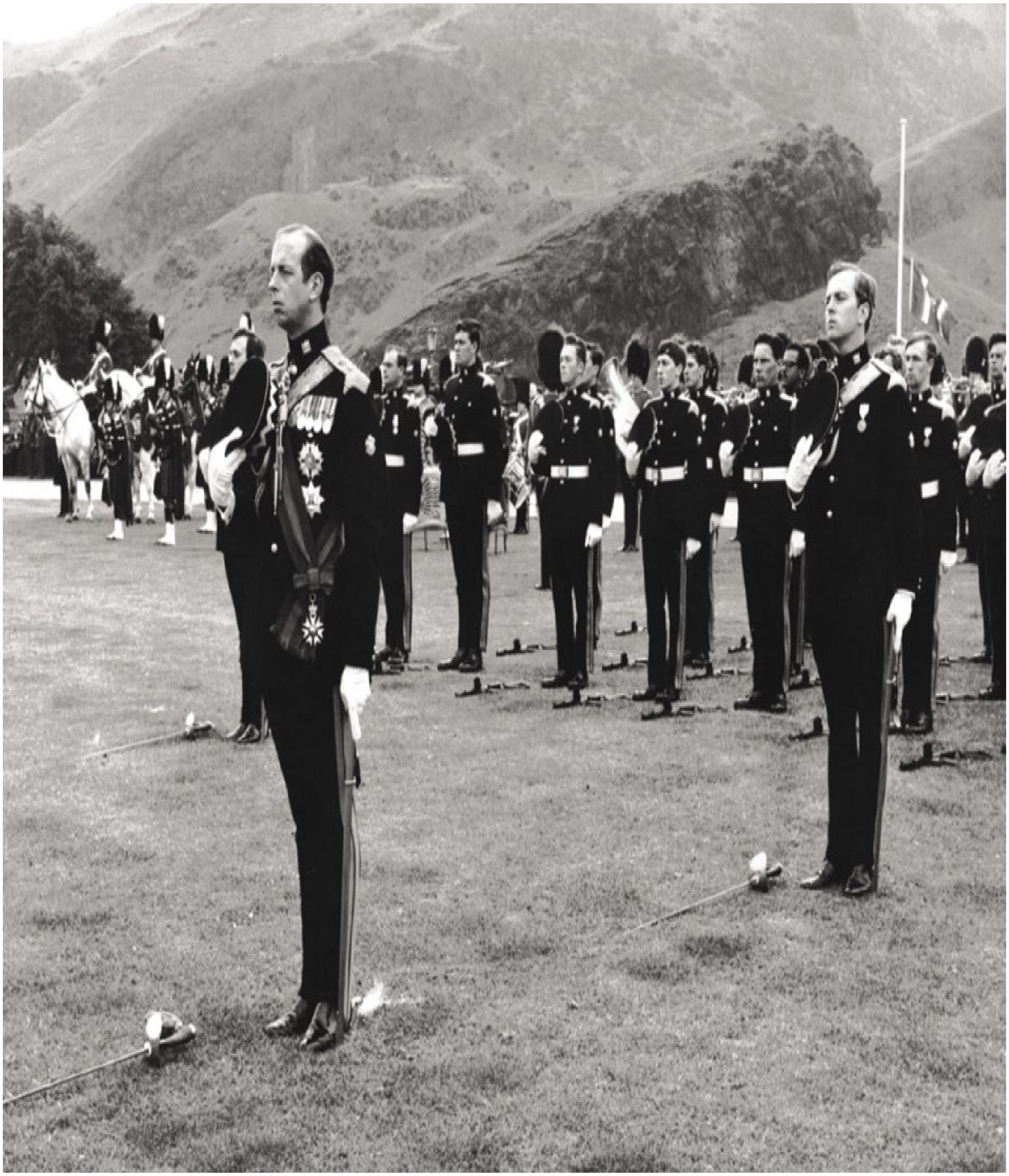
I have given you a standard which I hope will always remind you of your loyalty and the best traditions of the British Army.

May the service of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards be second to none!

Elizabeth R

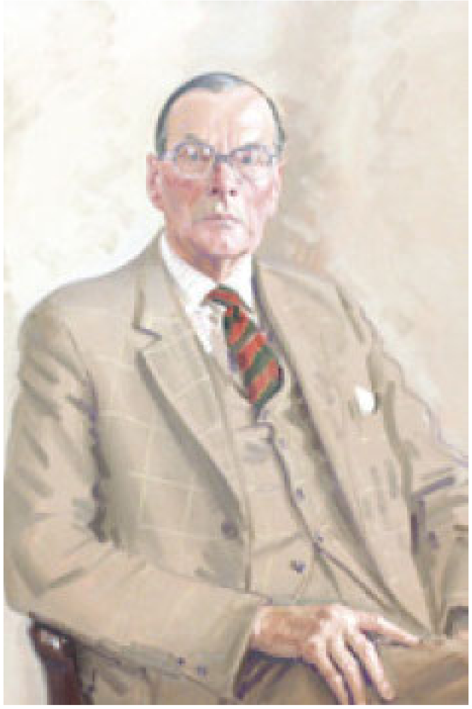
2nd July, 1971

The letter from HM The Queen to the Commanding Officer, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys), on the occasion of the formation of the regiment, 2 July 1971.



The amalgamation parade in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh, 2 July 1971; part of No. 3 Guard, commanded by Major HRH The Duke of Kent GCMG GCVO with, behind him, Second Lieutenant J. H. Callander.

HM The Queen with Major General Ralph Younger CB CBE DSO MC, Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel John Miller CVO DSO MC, Crown Equerry, and Corporal Arthur Hodges with Trojan, the new regiment's first drum horse, at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, 2 July 1971. Trojan was presented to the regiment by Her Majesty prior to the amalgamation ceremony and served with the regiment until 1987.



Major General Ralph Younger CB CBE DSO MC (1904–85), Colonel of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys) 1971–75; oil on canvas by Andrew Festing MBE PPRP.

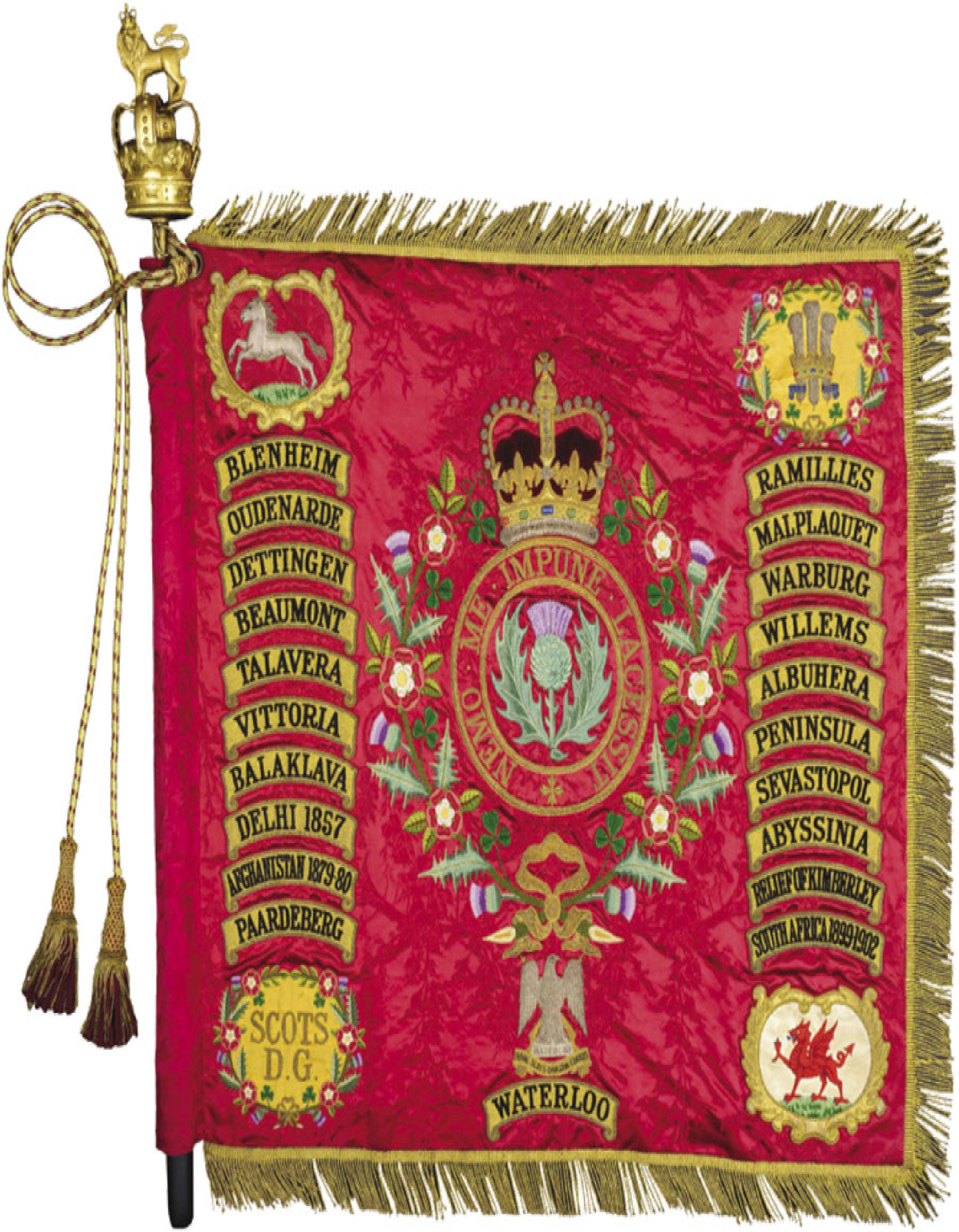
The new regiment was to be formed at Herford in BAOR and to retain the armoured reconnaissance role, being equipped for the purpose with Saladin armoured cars and Ferret scout cars, but the bands were amalgamated earlier than the formal date of 2 July 1971 so that the musicians of the new Regimental Band would be able to train together in order to be ready for the amalgamation ceremony. One result of this early amalgamation was the recording of the hymn 'Amazing Grace' by the combined Regimental Band and Pipes and Drums, which brought the name of the new regiment to immediate popular prominence and was an almost overnight success.

The week of rehearsals for amalgamation and the ceremonies themselves took place in Edinburgh during the end of June and beginning of July 1971. At the end of June the Queen presented the regiment with a drum horse, Trojan. The amalgamation ceremony, held in the park of the Palace of

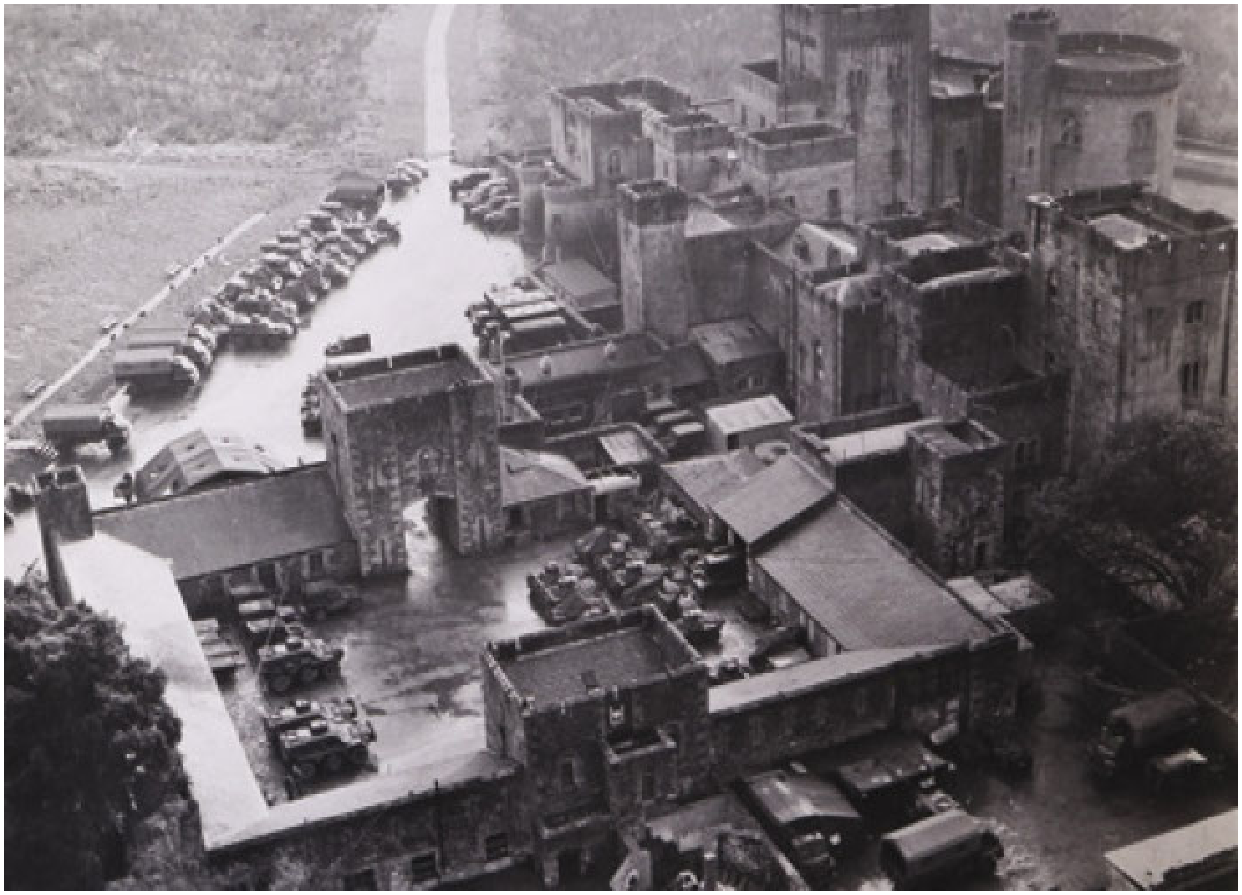
Holyroodhouse on 2 July, began with the disbandment of the Royal Scots Greys and the 3rd Carabiniers, whereupon the Greys' guidon and the 3rd Carabiniers' standard were marched off parade. This was followed by the formation of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys), whereupon the new standard was marched on, consecrated, presented to the regiment by its Colonel-in-Chief and then trooped through the ranks. The 3rd Carabiniers' standard was subsequently laid up in Chester Cathedral and the Greys' guidon similarly laid up in the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle.

The new regiment's first Commanding Officer was Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. (Tony) Bateman (1931–2012); having transferred from 17th/21st Lancers, he had taken over command of 3rd Carabiniers from Harry Dalzell-Payne in January 1970. His first major task had been to move 3rd Carabiniers from Münster to Herford and that had been achieved successfully. Amalgamation presented him with the challenge of forging the two parts into one cohesive and effective unit. The imminent prospect of deployment to Northern Ireland provided just the spur that was needed and the regiment exceeded all expectations in his final year of command, a year in which – as he wrote in the regimental magazine in May 1972 – 'strong friendships, the foundation of a regiment, have been forged by the stress of events'. Bateman was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his achievement.

Following amalgamation, the regiment returned to Harewood Barracks, Herford, where the 3rd Carabiniers had been stationed before amalgamation; the newly created and detached D Squadron was initially stationed at Redford Cavalry Barracks, south of Edinburgh. From August 1971 until June 1972, D Squadron alternated between Redford and Northern Ireland but in June 1971 it was sent to Cyprus for a six-month tour based at Gleneagles camp at RAF Nicosia. For the remainder of 1971, and into 1972, the regiment was divided between Herford and Northern Ireland, with squadrons swapping places as tours of duty ended, although neither was present on 30 January 1972 –'Bloody Sunday' – in Londonderry. During 1972 the regiment's peacekeeping role continued, with A and B Squadrons alternating duty in Northern Ireland and D Squadron in Cyprus; it suffered one casualty, Trooper Ian Caie, who was killed in action by a landmine at Richardson's Cross, Moybane, near Crossmaglen in County Armagh on 24 August 1972.


BLENHEIM
OUDENARDE
DETTINGEN
BEAUMONT
TALAVERA
VITTORIA
BALAKLAVA
DELHI 1857
AFGHANISTAN 1879-80
PAARDEBERG
SCOTS D.G.
NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT
WATERLOO
RAMILLIES
MALPLAQUET
WARBURG
WILLEMS
ALBUHERA
PENINSULA
SEVASTOPOL
ABYSSINIA
RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY
SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902

The first standard of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys), presented to the new regiment by HM The Queen at the amalgamation parade on 2 July 1971. It bears the iconography of the two regiments amalgamated that day as well as, on the side shown, their battle honours awarded to 1905 – the remaining battle honours being borne on the other side of the standard.



Gosford Castle, Gosford, Markethill, County Armagh, through which squadrons rotated and where most of the administrative elements were stationed during the regiment's tour that started in the autumn of 1971.

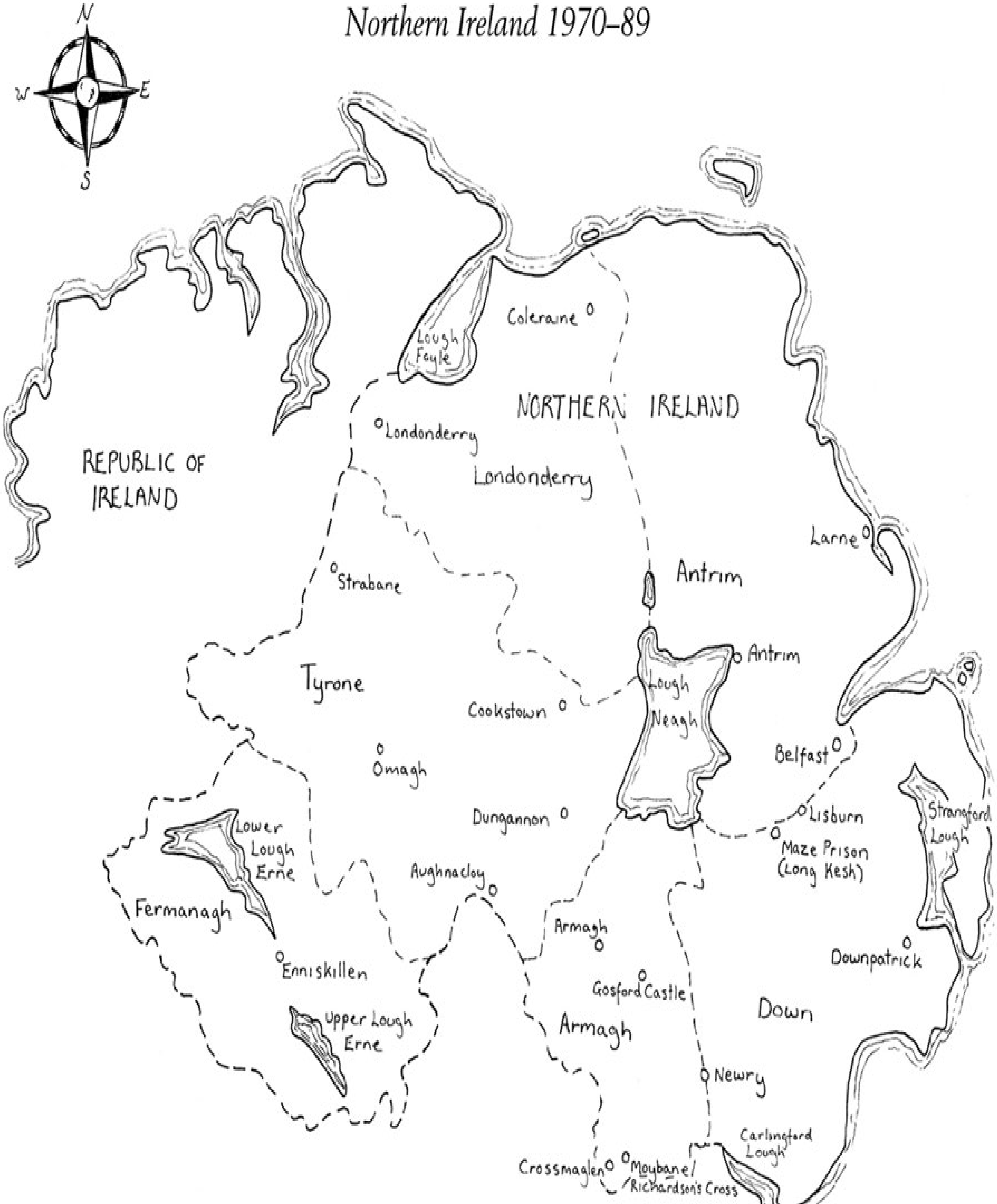
A Saladin armoured car of 1st Troop, B Squadron clears a barricade at Derrybeg, Newry, August 1972.

At the end of 1972 training began for the regiment as a whole to convert to the Chieftain main battle tank and in May 1973 a move was undertaken from Herford to Osnabrück. Later in 1973, the Sub-Home Headquarters in Chester – where Home Headquarters 3rd Carabiniers had been since 1959 – was relinquished and the Home Headquarters of the regiment was established at Edinburgh Castle. D Squadron remained detached from the main body of the regiment during 1973, doing a tour in Northern Ireland as an armoured reconnaissance squadron in Ferret scout cars between June and October, and remained in Scotland where it represented the Scottish face of the regiment, so vital for ensuring that recruits continued to be attracted.

By 1974, the regiment had served its country in many roles in nearly 300 years of existence but it had not been deployed as infantry since the First World War. That it was chosen to serve in that role in 1974 was indicative of the degree of undermanning and over-commitment from which the British Army suffered in the mid-1970s. However, it was a measure both of the regiment's timeless adaptability and of the exigencies of the situation in

Northern Ireland in 1974 that, for nearly four months – between the beginning of May and the end of August 1974 – the operational role of Scotland’s regular cavalry was as infantry. Deployed as the Maze Prison Guard Force and as infantrymen elsewhere in the province, the regiment arrived just as the Protestant Loyalist Ulster Defence Association was feeling at its strongest and as the Ulster Workers’ Council was about to organise a power-workers’ strike throughout Northern Ireland. In 1974 the Maze Prison – at Long Kesh in County Down – was divided into a number of compounds, each housing about seventy inmates from the differing political and military factions in the Northern Ireland of the time. In late July 1974 a major riot occurred in most of the prison, which housed Irish Republican prisoners, and this spread to the compounds where Irish Loyalist prisoners were incarcerated. In reaction to this, the Guard Force was heavily reinforced by troops from the theatre reserve. Serious rioting lasted for most of one day and the final settlement was reached when the Guard Force commander met the leaders of the riot (some of whom later served in the Northern Ireland Assembly) in a small wooden shed to negotiate. Peace was restored, several escape attempts thwarted and there were no serious casualties to members of the Guard Force. Once the regiment had returned to Osnabrück, D Squadron deployed again to Northern Ireland, returning to Edinburgh at the end of December 1974; while in the province, Trooper Donald Roy Davies died of natural causes on 18 November 1974.

Northern Ireland 1970–89


N
W
E
S
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
NORTHERN IRELAND
Coleraine
Lough Foyle
Londonderry
Londonderry
Larne
Antrim
Strabane
Antrim
Lough Neagh
Tyrone
Cookstown
Belfast
Omagh
Dungannon
Lisburn
Strangford Lough
Maze Prison (Long Kesh)
Lower Lough Erne
Fermanagh
Aughnacloy
Armagh
Downpatrick
Enniskillen
Gosford Castle
Down
Upper Lough Erne
Armagh
Newry
Carlingford Lough
Crossmaglen
Moybane/Richardson's Cross
20 KM

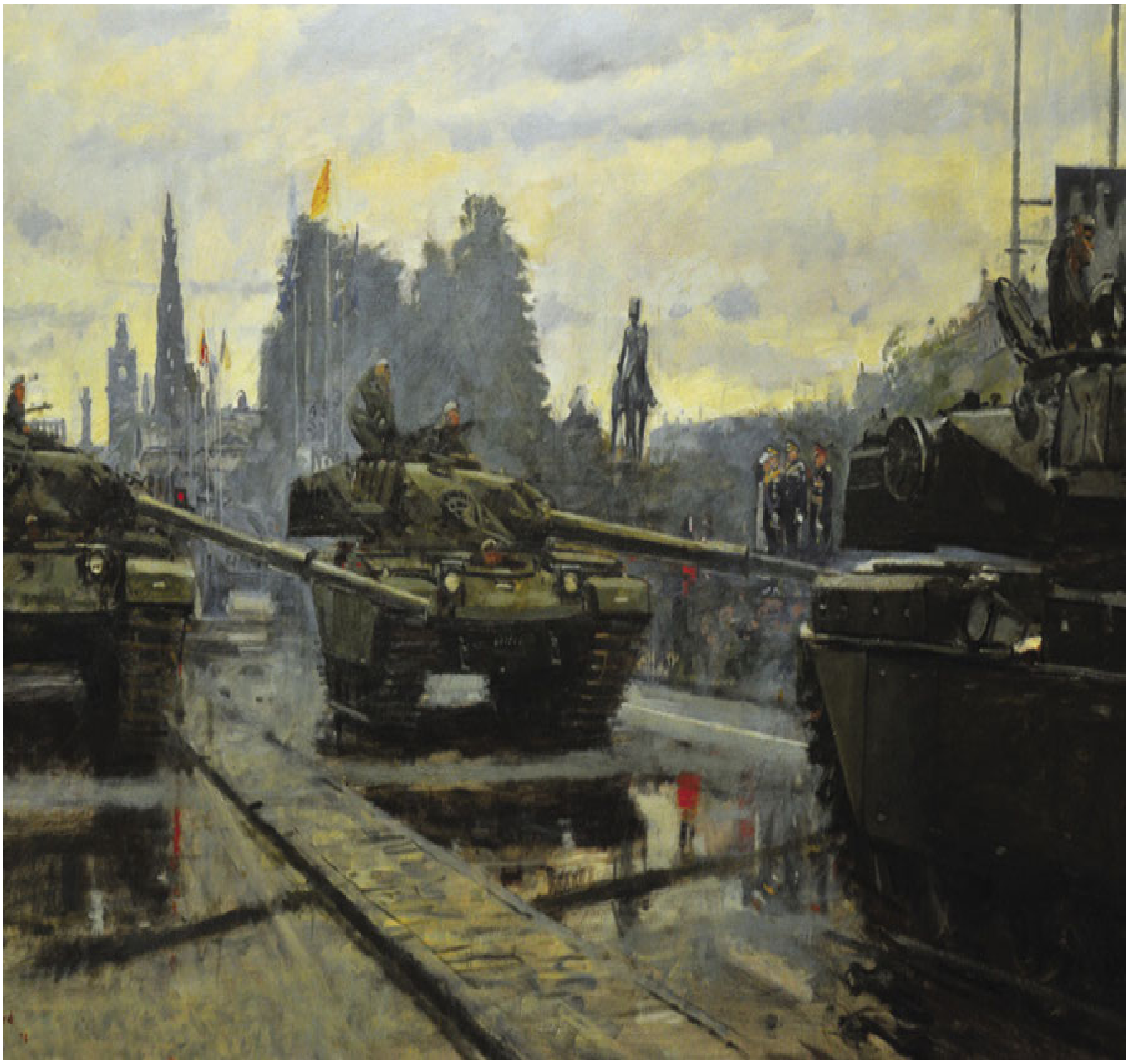
A rest during a Northern Ireland patrol, summer 1974. Left to right: Troopers Martin Berry, Donny Patterson, Pete Monaghan; behind, Ian Hall and Stuart McLymont (driver).

B Squadron moved to the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Canada in September 1974, shortly after returning from Northern Ireland. Following its time at BATUS, the squadron was able to report favourably on the training and firing possibilities offered by the vast and unimpeded expanses of the Canadian training area that had come, by 1971, to replace the Libyan desert as a training area for armoured warfare. In February 1975 D Squadron again demonstrated regimental adaptability when it assisted the civil power in Glasgow during a three-week strike by the city council's refuse collectors. A major exercise involving Regimental Headquarters and A and C Squadrons was run at Suffield, Alberta, in August 1975 and the majority of the regiment returned to Osnabrück in September to be occupied in BAOR exercises.

A further tour of duty in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, followed between May and August 1976 – with Regimental Headquarters and C Squadron in Dungannon, A Squadron in Cookstown and HQ Squadron in Aughnacloy; in June and July 1976 B Squadron served as part of the British occupying forces in Berlin. In early 1976, D Squadron deployed to Cyprus before returning to Edinburgh to be disbanded on 29 October. In August 1976, the five-year ‘colonels’ contract’ of 1971 as regards changes in dress and traditions having expired, the regiment adopted the grey beret now so distinctively associated with it. In the autumn of 1976, units of the regiment were employed in Germany in patrolling the border between the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic (West and East Germany) as well as providing guards for the army’s arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons. At the end of 1976, most of the regiment returned to Britain, to be stationed at Catterick in north Yorkshire – where its role was to act as the training regiment of the Royal Armoured Corps – but B Squadron remained as an independent armoured squadron in Berlin. During 1977, the regiment was dispersed between Germany and Catterick, with a troop in Omagh, County Tyrone, and another – equipped with Scorpion and Scimitar light armoured vehicles – in Belize, where British forces were stationed both to train in jungle warfare and to counter an invasion threat from neighbouring Guatemala. Its ‘aid to the civil power’ role was revived too during the firemen’s strike of 1977 when it performed firefighting duties in northern England and Scotland. While serving in Northern Ireland, Trooper Anthony Lewis Sutton was killed in a road traffic accident on 5 December 1977.

as something
SHELL

The army manned petrol stations during the Ulster Workers' Council strike called in protest at the Sunningdale Agreement, May 1974. Here Corporal Pete Clark serves a customer while Corporal Tony Evanson looks on.



The tercentenary tank parade, Princes Street, Edinburgh, in the late morning of Thursday 6 July 1978. Chieftain main battle tanks are depicted passing the saluting base, positioned next to the Royal Scots Greys' war memorial, and HRH The Duke of Kent is shown taking the salute, accompanied by the GOC Scotland, Lieutenant-General Sir David Scott-Barrett KCB MC, and the Colonel of the Regiment, Colonel Hugh Brassey OBE MC. Oil on canvas by Ken Howard.

The tercentenary year of the regiment’s existence was commemorated in 1978, measured from the raising of the original three companies of dragoons in Scotland in 1678. The anniversary was celebrated in fine style in July 1978, with a tank parade down Princes Street in Edinburgh, the salute being taken by HRH The Duke of Kent. This was followed by a parade in the park of the Palace of Holyroodhouse which was attended by the regiment’s Colonel-in-Chief, HM The Queen. Later in the same year the regiment attended the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in some strength. B Squadron remained in Berlin and a composite troop remained in Belize. ‘Aid to the civil power’ duties began the year 1979, when the regiment was called in to assist during a strike of ambulance drivers, but in the spring the regiment returned to Germany, to Athlone Barracks in the giant Sennelager training complex, whereupon B Squadron rejoined from Berlin. Between September and November 1980 the regiment deployed two squadrons in the infantry role to patrol the city centre and Ardoyne area of Belfast. Early in 1981 the regiment embarked upon tank training at Soltau, in temperatures recorded as dipping to -20°C, and in August two squadrons went to BATUS in Canada for training and firing practice.

In 1982 it was the turn of two different squadrons to train at BATUS, while another squadron patrolled the Inner German Border between East and West Germany. It was also the year in which, gradually, the regiment’s Chieftain main battle tanks became fitted with the Improved Fire Control System (IFCS) which offered far more accurate and far faster shooting; C Squadron was the first to receive Chieftains with the new system fitted and conversion to this new system occupied most of the regiment for much of the year. In 1983, the regiment’s IFCS-equipped Chieftains enabled it to achieve second place in the Northern Army Group section of the Canadian Army Trophy for tank gunnery. In November 1983, a guided-weapons troop was formed, taking thirty-one men from all the regiment’s squadrons, and in 1984 this troop was equipped with the anti-tank missile Swingfire. In 1985, a composite squadron, known as Eagle Squadron, was formed in order to compete for the Canadian Army Trophy and the regiment took fifth place in the competition that year. In December 1985 the guided-weapons troop was disbanded.

A Chieftain main battle tank on the Bergen-Hohne ranges, 1983. The tank has just fired its main armament, which will have made an ear-splitting 'crack' and produced a brilliant flash and a tongue of flame from the gun's muzzle, shown smoking in this photograph. Note the regimental vandyke pennant.

Late in 1986, after seven years at Sennelager, the regiment returned to Britain, to be stationed at Tidworth garrison. A 'Keeping the Army in the Public Eye' (KAPE) tour of Scotland had been undertaken in May 1986 and the whole regiment was assembled at Tidworth by November 1986. By this time, the regiment was at four-squadron strength again; three squadrons and HQ Squadron were based at Tidworth and D Squadron was detached to Warminster as a demonstration squadron. Being stationed in Britain in 1987 meant a complete change from BAOR routine: no more nuclear site guards and border patrols and no more trips to BATUS in Canada. Instead, A Squadron carried out public duties in Edinburgh in October 1987, B and C Squadrons exercised with other formations at home and in Denmark, the

Reconnaissance Troop served in Belize for six months and the Pipes and Drums and Regimental Band took part in a commercial tour of Australia, followed, later in 1987, by one to the USA. The regiment remained based at Tidworth until November 1988, during which time it received a new drum horse, Ramillies, from the Queen in May 1987 and was visited by Her Majesty in June 1988; Ramillies replaced Trojan, who had been the regimental drum horse since 1971. The regiment returned to Germany late in 1988, to be stationed at Fallingbostel and to convert to the new Challenger 1 main battle tank.

By 1988, tours of duty in BAOR were envisaged as being of eleven-year duration, so in that year the popular prediction – based upon precedent unchallenged since 1945 – was that the regiment could expect to remain in its decades-old operational role in the Rhine army until nearly the end of the century. However, such predictions took no account of the eventual effect upon the British Army of the Rhine of two Russian words that had entered international common usage in the mid-1980s: (glasnost: openness) and (perestroika: restructuring). A similar lack of account – through lack of detailed knowledge – was taken of the real strength of the Warsaw Pact nations supposedly poised to invade Western Europe. By the mid-1980s, the Soviet Union – against which NATO had been ranged in a Cold War since 1945 – was nearing bankruptcy, had a stagnant economy, was immersed in an unwinnable war in Afghanistan, was technologically backward and had been overtaken in Cold War realpolitik by the combined defence policies of the administrations of President Ronald Reagan of the United States of America and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, later Baroness Thatcher, of the United Kingdom. The Reagan administration’s introduction in the early 1980s of its Strategic Defense Initiative – nicknamed ‘Star Wars’ after the 1977 American film – was intended to counter any and all intercontinental ballistic missile threats from the Soviet Union. In the same decade, through the positioning of American nuclear cruise missiles on British soil and the use of British bases by the US Air Force for its attacks on Libya in 1986, Thatcher’s Britain unequivocally aligned itself with Reagan’s America in a stalwart and aggressive posture against the Soviet Union, a nation memorably described by Reagan as the ‘evil empire’. In the face of this Anglo-American alliance and the immense technological power and wealth that it represented, the Soviet Union – its economy collapsing and its huge but seriously under-resourced military forces overstretched – could neither contemplate attack nor mount any serious defence. The election of Mikhail Gorbachev – with whom the words glasnost and perestroika will always be associated – to the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985 was the beginning of a period of fundamental change to almost every aspect of the way in which the USSR was governed. This change necessarily affected Soviet foreign and defence policy and was infectious, in that it came inexorably to influence the Soviet Union's satellite nations within the Warsaw Pact – the alliance of Eastern European Communist nations that BAOR, within NATO, was in existence militarily to resist. Few of the internal changes within the Soviet Union and its satellites seem to have influenced British military thinking to any great extent before 1989 since, although a warming in east–west relations was perceptible in the late 1980s, there had been no obvious change in Warsaw Pact military deployments in eastern Europe. A profound lack of trust of the Soviets – built up, wholly justifiably, during the Cold War years – also affected Britain's strategic defence policy: hence the eleven-year tours of duty for British armoured regiments in BAOR by 1988.

Events on the European continent in 1989 overturned more than four decades of military assumptions about the role of BAOR. In that year, in almost all of the Soviet Union's satellite states, popular revolutions triumphed over Communist dictatorships. In turn, the spread of democracy affected Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania. These revolutions would not have happened had the Soviet Union been in a position – financially, militarily and politically – to suppress them, as it had been in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The government of Mikhail Gorbachev – elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet in May 1989 – also lacked the will to do so. The revolution in East Germany had the most profound and immediate effect on BAOR since it seemed to imply that there was no longer a threat to West Germany and Western Europe from Communist military forces. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was a symbolic culmination of the overthrow of the Communist government of East Germany.

34KA91
THE ROYAL HUSSARS

Lieutenant-Colonel John Sharples receives the regiment's fleet of Challenger 1 tanks from Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Morris, Royal Hussars, in Lumsden Barracks, Fallingbostel, 1 December 1988.

During all these unforeseen eruptions of democracy and expressions of popular will in Eastern Europe, the regiment remained at Fallingbostel. Its operational role was unchanged since nothing was at that time certain about what would emerge from the chaos further east but constant vigilance was necessary because of the occasional instances of IRA terrorism directed against British soldiers in West Germany. Conversion to Challenger 1 occupied the first three months of 1989, A and B Squadrons went to BATUS in October and November and, in Paris in July, the Pipes and Drums and Regimental Band contributed to the bicentennial commemoration of the French Revolution. The year ended with many in the regiment uncertain as to what the future would hold; that uncertainty would not prevail for long.

CREATION

The Regimental Band of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards was formed from the military bands of the Royal Scots Greys and 3rd Carabiniers; they came together before the amalgamation of the two regiments in June 1971 so that they would be prepared for the parades and ceremonial.

The merger of these two famous military bands brought together a history of military music dating back 300 years; in the early years, there were mounted drummers and hautbois, followed by dismounted bands, then wonderful mounted bands and kettledrummers in the 19th century and early 20th century. The Scots Greys Mounted Band with its grey horses, scarlet tunics, and kettledrummer with white bearskin was referred to as 'the most picturesque mounted band in Europe'.

The Pipes and Drums of the Scots Greys, however, were formed just after the war in 1946 with the blessing of the Colonel-in-Chief, King George V1, who designed most of the uniform and gave his personal authority for the wearing of the Royal Stewart tartan.

On the amalgamation, Warrant Officer 1 Stewart Fairbairn of the Scots Greys handed over the baton to Warrant Officer 1 Colin Herbert of the Carabiniers, who became Bandmaster of the new regiment, and Pipe Major Jimmy Pryde retired and handed over to Pipe Major Tony Crease. The bands of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards were born.

THE 1970s AND 'AMAZING GRACE'

Before the amalgamation, an extraordinary event occurred that would change the course of military music. Pipe Sergeant Crease heard the Judy Collins hit 'Amazing Grace' and wrote a pipe score for it. Bandmaster Fairbairn wrote an arrangement for the Regimental Band. It was first performed by both bands on the square of Redford Cavalry Barracks in Edinburgh; it was evident to all present that a new and wonderful 'sound' had been produced. By chance, the Greys had a contract with RCA Records and one album was yet to be completed. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Mickey Blacklock, directed that the newly formed Regimental Band and Pipes and Drums would record all the music for the new regiment in time for the amalgamation. RCA was not renowned for extravagance and this final album, which was named Farewell to the Greys, was recorded in the Study Centre at Redford Barracks with grey army blankets around the walls to enhance the acoustics! It took less than a day to record with time to spare and there was room for the last-minute inclusion of 'Amazing Grace' with the pipes played by Sergeant Crease (later Major Tony Crease MBE BEM). History was made.

The first Pipe Major of the new regiment, Staff Sergeant Tony Crease.

Trojan on parade, ridden by Trooper Alan Johnstone.

The regimental bands then played a vital part in the events surrounding the amalgamation, particularly the parade attended by HM The Queen, Colonel-in-Chief, when ‘Amazing Grace’ was first played in public. The Regimental Band was up to strength at thirty-five and the Pipes and Drums at twenty. Trojan, the black drum horse presented by the Queen, was also on parade for the first time.

RCA expected to sell 5,000 copies of Farewell to the Greys. In early 1972, however, the producer of BBC Radio’s Late Night Extra, Ian Fenner, selected ‘Amazing Grace’ to be played on Keith Fordyce’s programme. This one play caused a massive surge of interest nationwide and a mail-bag to the BBC of 30,000 letters; RCA were forced into pressing a single. In April 1972 ‘Amazing Grace’ became number 1 in

the Top of the Pops charts and stayed there for six weeks selling one million records in the UK. This led to live appearances on Top of the Pops and overnight the bands became ‘pop stars’ earning eight gold discs for worldwide sales of seven million and a huge demand for them to go ‘on tour’. Two further chart successes followed: the 1972 Christmas single, ‘Little Drummer Boy’, reached number 13 and ‘Heyken’s Serenade’ number 30.

Victor
THE ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS
AMAZING GRACE

The gold disc marking sales of one million copies of ‘Amazing Grace’.

The results of the ‘Amazing Grace’ success were extraordinary. At home it was seen as a watershed in military music. Combining the pipes with military bands became acceptable, indeed the fashion, and the style of music set by the regimental bands was emulated internationally, particularly in the Commonwealth. The piece became an ‘evergreen’,

played on special occasions worldwide, while the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards became a household name at home and abroad.

This massive success of course generated a frenetic schedule for the bands. An extensive tour of the United Kingdom, starting in the Albert Hall, London, and ending in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, was followed by many tours over the years to USA, Canada, South America, New Zealand and Australia. They played before Pope John Paul II in Italy, President Ronald Reagan in Washington, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in Paris and with Cliff Richard in Hamburg. Of course, the highlight for the bands has always been performing for the Colonel-in-Chief. They have done so on all the Queen's frequent visits to the regiment over the years, but there have been special moments such as Her Majesty's Silver, Golden and Diamond jubilees, the Royal Variety Performance and the tercentenary celebrations in Edinburgh.

The Regimental Band, 1971. The Bandmaster, WO1 Colin Herbert (centre) is between the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Tony

Bateman (to his right), and the Band President, Major Charles Ramsay.

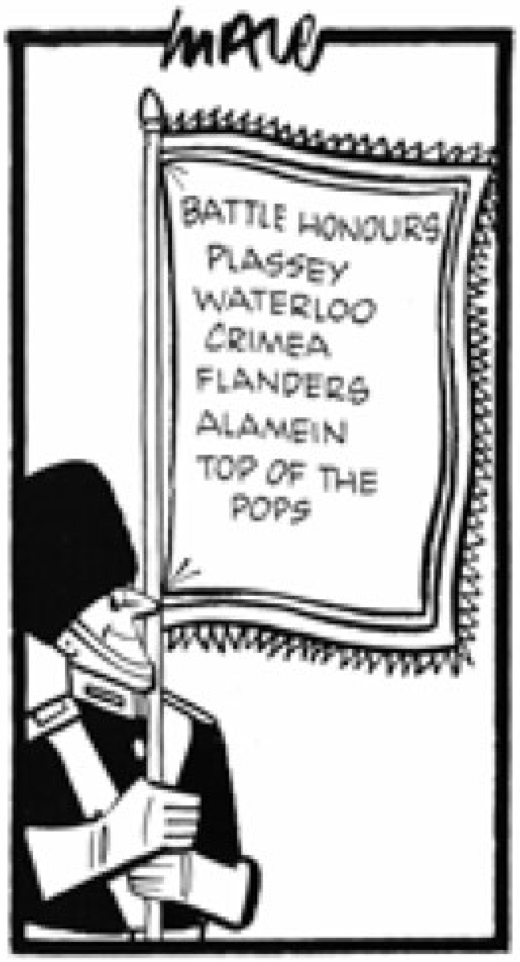
In 1976 the Pipes and Drums, by then the biggest pipe band in the British Army, with twenty pipers and ten drummers, earned themselves the coveted status of Grade 1 from the Scottish Pipe Band Association. This was a just and well-deserved accolade for their high standards and the band was one of the very few military pipes and drums ever to achieve this status. In 1978 both bands were graded 'Outstanding' by the Royal Military School of Music.

The regiment returned with its bands to Germany in 1971 and went on to play its full part in the 'Cold War' training and manoeuvres with the many operational tours to Northern Ireland. The bands, despite pressure from the commercial world, neglected neither their traditional high musical standards nor their military duties in the regiment.

THE 1980s

Life for the two bands returned to some 'normality' on arrival in BAOR and Sennelager at the end of 1978 after a hectic tour in Catterick. Both bands were required to refresh their military skills: the Regimental Band as medical orderlies and the pipers and drummers as tank crewmen. The normal round of BAOR band musical commitments followed, together with engagements elsewhere on the Continent and in Scotland for the Edinburgh Tattoo. The bands recorded a number of albums including Into the Eighties and In the Finest Tradition. The regiment returned home to Tidworth in 1986 and in two years the bands made three significant and successful overseas tours, one to Australia and New Zealand and two to USA in support of Dewar's Whisky. The highlight of the Tidworth Tour was the visit of the Colonel-in-Chief where the bands laid on a special performance including a march past with Ramillies, the new drum horse recently presented by Her Majesty The Queen.

Ramillies, the regimental drum horse who replaced Trojan in 1987, ridden by Staff Sergeant James Hogarth. Like Trojan, Ramillies – nicknamed 'Rambo' by the younger element in the regiment – was a gift from HM The Queen, the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief. Ramillies retired in 2001 and was replaced by Talavera, again a gift to the regiment from Her Majesty.


Maco
BATTLE HONOURS
PLASSEY
WATERLOO
CRIMEA
FLANDERS
ALAMEIN
TOP OF THE POPS

Musical success as seen by 'Maco' (Lance Corporal Brian Macpherson).

THE 1990s

On Operation Granby the Regimental Band manned the Regimental Aid Post and the Pipes and Drums reverted to their primary role as tank crewmen. The Commanding Officer of the day stated:

It is worth saying a word about the Bands on Op Granby; we have become used to the versatility shown by the Pipes and Drums in being Tank Crewman one moment and musicians the next and perhaps have taken them for granted. However, now we have seen the Military Band show similar flexibility in that they became the Regimental Aid Post and on return along with the Pipes and Drums reached their normal standard of Musical Excellence.

Within a few weeks they were off to the USA for another tour. In 1992, both bands performed for the fortieth anniversary of HM The Queen's Coronation, along with Cilla Black and Cliff Richard, and performed at the last great Berlin Tattoo before British troops left the city. The end of the Cold War brought substantial force reductions and on 15 March 1993, the Secretary of State for Defence announced that by 1995 there would be a 58 per cent reduction in army bands. This was not accepted lying down by the Cavalry Colonels who summoned the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) to explain himself, but it was to no avail and by 1995, after hundreds of years, the wonderful Regimental Band was no more.

In 1997 the Pipes and Drums took up their primary role on the deployment of the regiment to Bosnia. However, they were never without their instruments and played all over the country.

2000

In the new millennium, the Pipes and Drums had to adapt to new circumstances. First, there was no Regimental Band, so they cleverly produced their own 'backing group' to ensure that 'combined music' could continue to be played. Second, more frequent operational tours meant that they were required more often in their primary role as tank crewmen. This required a difficult balancing act between piping, training and operations.

In 2001 they had time to record an inspirational album, Parallel Tracks, using their own 'cutting edge' backing group and featuring Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits. This was hugely successful, and thirty years

after ‘Amazing Grace’, it was another watershed moment for pipe band music and another change in style and fashion. The Pipes and Drums performed again for HM The Queen at the Golden Jubilee Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2002. This was the last parade for the outstanding drum horse Ramillies who, after fifteen years of service to the regiment, gave his final salute to Her Majesty as he left the esplanade. In 2003 at rather short notice the band was back in Iraq with the regimental battle group for Operation Telic and the battle for Basra where, as tank crewmen in challenging and dangerous circumstances, they acquitted themselves with skill and courage. This significant event in the regimental history was commemorated in the tune ‘The Gateway to Basra’ composed by Pipe Major Derek Potter. Back in Germany, they received a welcome accolade when rated ‘the best Pipes and Drums in the British Army’ by the Director of Army Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming.

The Pipes and Drums in Kosovo, 2001. The Pipe Major, Staff Sergeant Bryon Brotherton, on the far right.

Further operational tours in Iraq and Afghanistan were to follow. In 2007 Spirit of the Glen became a nationwide success and reached the top of the Classic FM charts, winning the Classic FM Award for that year. In the same year it was announced that Pipe Major Potter had been appointed by Her Majesty as the Sovereign's Piper, the first from the regiment and an honour indeed. In 2008, the Pipes and Drums toured the United States with the Coldstream Guards.

WO1 Derek Potter was appointed the Sovereign's Piper in 2008.

In 2012, the Pipes and Drums were the only pipe band invited to Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee Pageant held in the shadow of Windsor Castle along with 600 horses and Commonwealth contingents from around the world.

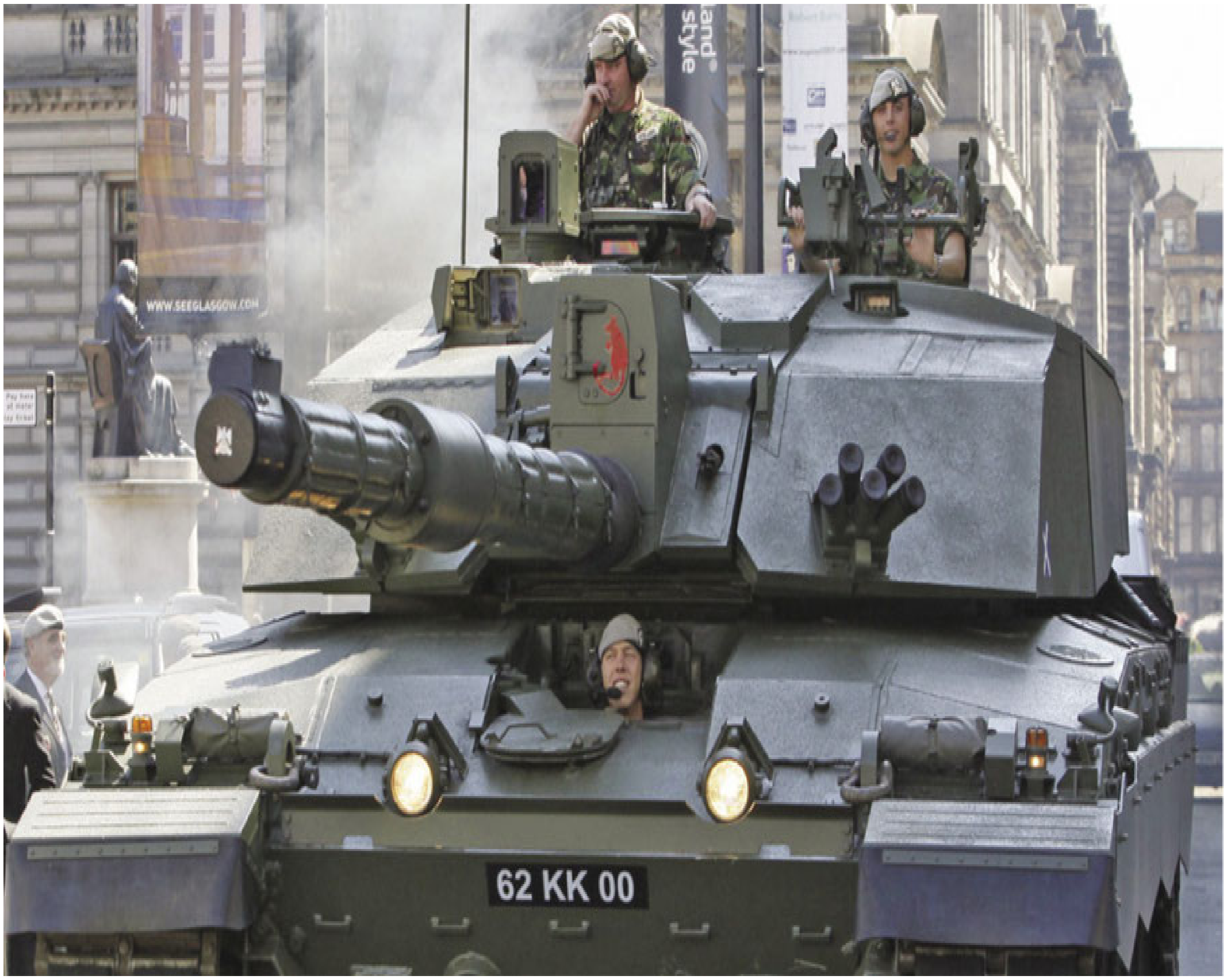
Over many years, the Regimental Band and the Pipes and Drums have acted as superb ambassadors across the world for the regiment, the British Army and the country and at the same time have carried out their duties on many operational tours. This catalogue of success did not come easily; it has been the result of fine leadership, musical talent and sheer hard work. The bands will be remembered for their many great achievements on behalf of their regiment and the huge contribution they have made to the Regimental Trust and many other worthy charities.

Melville Jameson

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER NINE

SCOTLAND’S CAVALRY: THE ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS (CARABINIERS AND GREYS), 1990–2010



Exercise Soldier’s Return, Glasgow, July 2009. Sergeant Colin Stewart in the Challenger 2 commander’s seat, Trooper Steven Barret – loader, and Lance Corporal Darren Laing – driver. (© Herald and Times Group)

In 1990, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the gradual democratisation of the USSR’s Communist former satellite states, Britain’s principal potential enemy, the Warsaw Pact nations, appeared no longer to present a threat to the area known to NATO as the ‘Central Region’ – broadly speaking, Western Europe between the Danish and Austrian borders and west to the Atlantic. Prior to 1990, and in the event of the type of European land war anticipated after 1945, this was where the British Army of the Rhine would have fought. As the threat of a land invasion of Western Europe from the east had apparently disappeared, it might have been thought that the armoured regiments of the British Army would have no further role: many infantry soldiers thought just that. The reaction of the British government of the time was to seek what became known as a ‘peace dividend’: capitalising on the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact by immediately reducing the defence budget and particularly the army’s share of it. In July 1990 the government published a report called ‘Options for Change’, the results of a defence review conducted by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) since the seismic political changes in Eastern Europe had occurred. As part of that review, the strategic value of tanks and the formations in which they served had been hotly debated in the Ministry of Defence into the summer of 1990. Some senior officers and MOD civil servants were apparently dismissive of proposals within the army to maintain Britain’s ability to deploy armoured formations outside the Central Region. However, events later in 1990 proved that such views were premature. Events for the next two decades would show that, for the regiment and indeed for the army, nothing was quite as certain as uncertainty.

An A Squadron Challenger 1 tank being unloaded at Al Jubail port, Saudi Arabia, October 1990.

The year 1990 began conventionally for the regiment, with A and C Squadrons carrying out patrols along what was still called the Inner German Border, but in early August, and in something of a repetition of its action thirty years before, Iraq invaded Kuwait, annexed it and massed its forces on

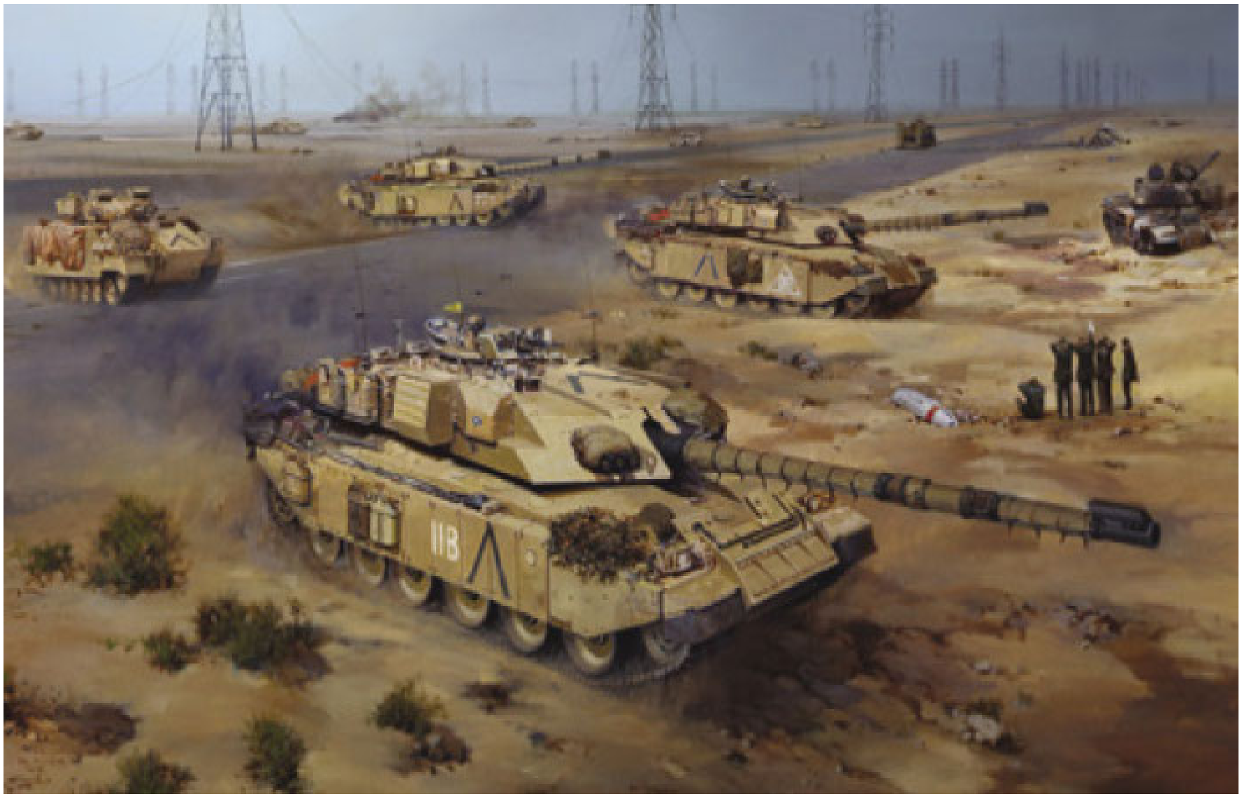
Kuwait's border with Saudi Arabia. The USA immediately offered naval, military and air force assistance to Saudi Arabia and the British government committed naval and air forces in the same role, following this on 14 September with a commitment to send military forces too. The British operation was codenamed Granby after General John Manners MP, Marquess of Granby (1721–70), who had led British cavalry with great panache during the Seven Years War of 1756–63, notably at the battle of Warburg in 1760. The initial strategy was to protect Saudi Arabia from invasion by Iraq and, as a rapid response to that threat, the 7th Armoured Brigade was ordered to deploy from BAOR.

The brigade, under command of Brigadier (later Major General) Patrick Cordingley, comprised the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars and 1st Battalion, the Staffordshire Regiment. Each of the regiments in the brigade was reinforced by soldiers from other regiments, a troop from 17th/21st Lancers joining C Squadron of the regiment. The regiment's tanks, Challenger 1s, required reinforcement too – the early marques of that tank having developed a reputation for unreliability that, while tiresome on exercise, might well prove fatal in war.

More modern Challenger 1 Mk IIIs were acquired from the Life Guards and, once in theatre, modifications were made to the tanks' engines and armour as well as to the Thermal Observation and Gunnery Sights (TOGS). The operation to move the regiment to Saudi Arabia began on 19 October, when A Squadron flew out from Germany, and the movement of personnel was complete four days later, the tanks arriving by sea from Bremerhaven by the end of the month. At the end of the year, the regiment moved to the Devil Dog Dragoon ranges in order to train in live firing under desert conditions in preparation for a probable land offensive against Iraq.

In November 1990, the British government decided to increase its forces in Saudi Arabia, with a view to ejecting the Iraqis from Kuwait; to this end, the 4th Armoured Brigade joined the 7th, and both brigades, together with supporting regiments and logistics units, came under the command of 1st (UK) Armoured Division, commanded by Major General (later General Sir) Rupert Smith. This division formed in theatre in December, initially under command of the US Marine Corps, before being deployed to form the right wing of VII (US) Corps within the forces amassed by the coalition of allies, endorsed by the United Nations, ranged against Iraq.

On 17 January 1991, following the expiry of a deadline by which Iraq should have withdrawn its forces from Kuwait, a forty-three-day air offensive against Iraqi forces began. The air attacks, involving more than 110,000 sorties by more than 2,400 aircraft from ten countries, destroyed Iraq's air defences, its aircraft and their airfields, neutralised the Iraqi command, control and communication centres, cut off Iraqi forces in Kuwait from their lines of communication with Iraq and strategically targeted specific Iraqi strongpoints in Kuwait and Iraq. While the air offensive was progressing, the coalition's ground forces moved forward to their forming up positions prior to their attack: the Iraqi forces had been rendered unable either to observe or counter their movements. Meanwhile, the Iraqi communications systems were flooded with electronic misinformation, misleading troop movements were undertaken by the coalition's forces and, from 16 February, prolonged artillery bombardments were brought to bear on Iraqi troop concentrations within range. The regiment's units crossed the 'start line' into Iraq, west of Wadi al-Batin, at 3.15pm on 25 February, passing through breaches in the Iraqi defences made by the US 1st Infantry Division earlier that afternoon. The regiment's four sabre squadrons had all made contact with the enemy by the close of the following day, moving swiftly and engaging Iraqi positions and armour both day and night. Each squadron's and troop's experience of the war was different but what seems common to all accounts is surprise at the speed with which it was over, the lack of serious Iraqi resistance, an overall degree of satisfaction at how the tanks and the technology performed, appreciation of the value of the time spent in theatre in training and relief at the lack of regimental casualties sustained. The account of B Squadron's part in Operation Granby, written for the regimental magazine of 1991 by Major Austen Ramsden – the squadron leader – was sufficiently graphic to be quoted almost verbatim by Field Marshal Lord Carver in his Britain's Army in the 20th Century (1998).



After one of the fastest advances in the Army's history, the Commanding Officer's and Second-in-Command's tanks followed by the Royal Artillery Battery Commander's Warrior, arrive on the Basra Road as the cease-fire is announced. Oil on canvas by Michael Turner.

Kate Adie interviewing Trooper Ian Campbell; Lance Corporal (later Major) Bryon Brotherton looks on.

Journalists who find themselves among soldiers discover a world apart. In the Saudi desert in 1990, 43,000 British troops prepared to invade Iraq and drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Our small media unit felt we'd landed on Mars.

'Sparrow fart for RV with SCOTS DG tomorrow.' We stared at our officer. Our future was being outlined yet again in incomprehensible army-speak. We spent the night in our tent deafened by the American army grinding its M1A1s through the gritty sand just yards away, oblivious to the stray armoured vehicle that apparently stopped five yards short of squashing us at two in the morning.

Shoved into Land Rovers at dawn, we bumped across bleak desert while realising that yet again we'd failed to bring all the requisite bits of kit with us. Mislaying helmets, water bottles, gas masks, floppy hats, loo-roll, sunglasses, goggles, webbing and sundry other items was second nature to us, partly because we spent precious minutes in the half-light inspecting boots for scorpions. Nor were our uniforms exactly chic: the higgledy-piggledy pile from which they had been issued appeared to ignore precise sizing.

Confronted in the early orange glare of the desert sun by an immaculately turned out clutch of officers of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, imagine our sense of being the fourth, bedraggled, estate. Their Colonel, John Sharples, sported a grey beret which must have come straight from the maker's hat box.

They had an air of relaxed elegance. Even when leaping onto Challenger tanks. We crawled up like ancient mountaineers; they zoomed over the tracks, gun and turret like lizards. Very young soldiers appeared to have an encyclopaedic knowledge of vehicles, terrain and how to avoid shooting camels (very expensive compensation demanded by our Saudi hosts). The air of a family knuckling down to a common task was palpable.

Weeks later, as political negotiations stalled and war drew nearer, I came across a number of officers who were contemplating battle. At night, the tents outlined by the moon, no other lights visible anywhere across the flat landscape, we had conversations that inevitably led to the test ahead. Sometimes they talked lightly; sometimes they wrapped themselves in logistics and faith in weaponry. They gave the impression that if the Iraqis got really difficult, they would subdue them with SCOTS DG charm. But this having been said, underlying everything was their main concern that they should not lose their men.

The whole subject of casualties was fraught with political pressure. There had already been a row in London when a thoughtful comment had reached the press from a brigadier. The majority of today's MPs are not personally familiar with the realities of warfare – and much had been made of 'precision weapons' and 'force protection', especially by our American allies. And with satellite TV and the newly arrived satellite phones there was a sense that the families and the wider public were following the 'action' – but probably not focusing on the consequences.

Late at night in the desert, this was not expressed as fear for one's own life. It was always about 'the boys'. It was not sentimental: it was about a close-knit group, a family, and mutual responsibility. Therefore, one of my abiding memories is the first morning into Kuwait, in a cacophony

of racing tanks and blazing vehicles, seeing a small group of men just dismounted from their tanks.

I recognised Colonel Sharples and we then had a slightly incoherent conversation – no one having had a wink of sleep since we hurtled across the border. But his first words were clear enough: 'We're all here. All the boys. Marvellous. Not one missing. It's wonderful.'

All around us was wreckage, huddled Iraqi prisoners of war, underneath a sky of bulging oil-fire clouds.

The men from SCOTS DG strode on, having fought through rain in the pitch dark, dodged incoming missiles and destroyed enemy tanks. Celebrating the safe arrival of all their regimental family.

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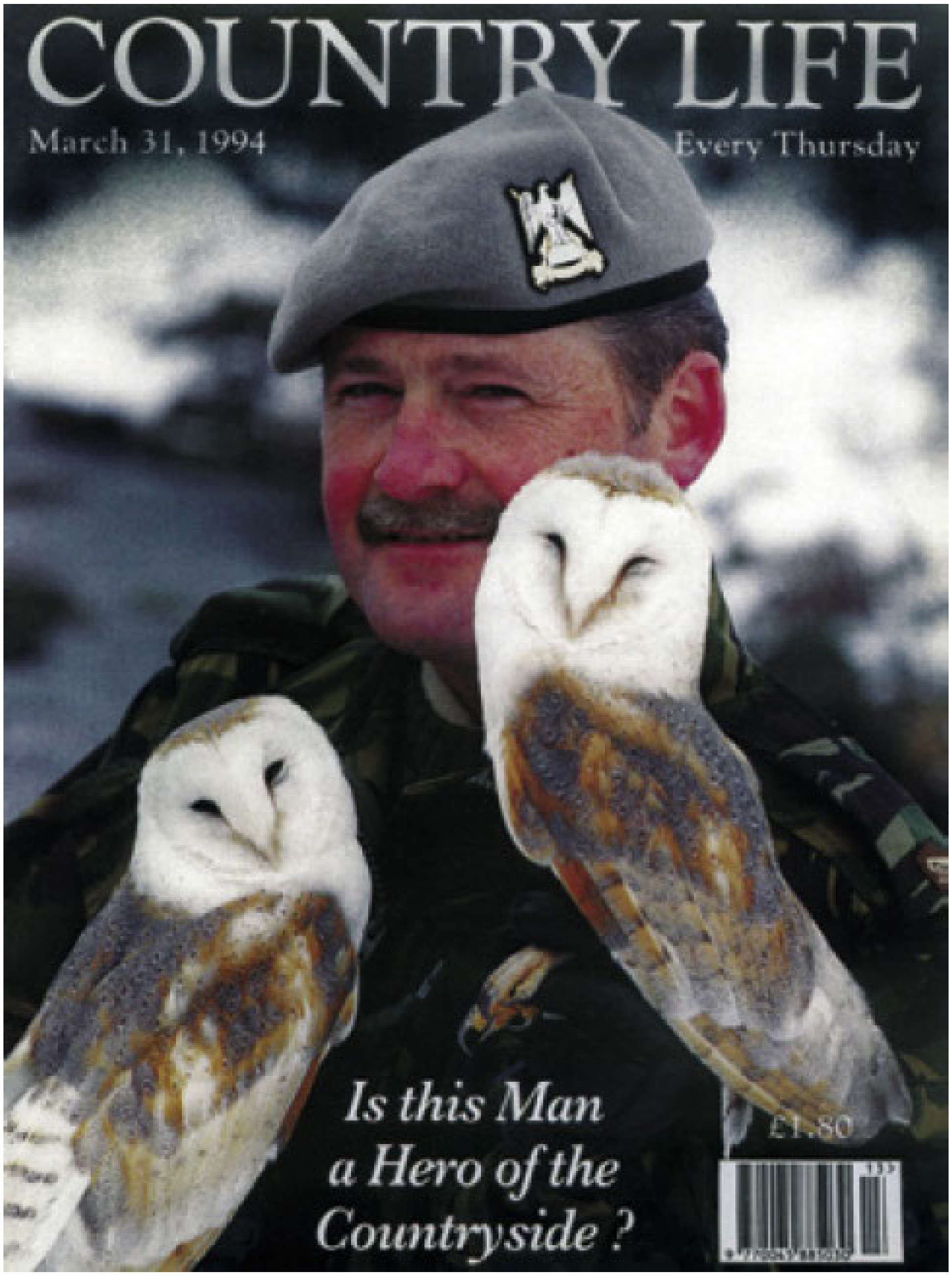
Two regimental stories stand out in a host of such tales; both resulted in the award of decorations for gallantry. During the night of 25 February, Second Lieutenant Richard Telfer, who had joined the regiment only four months before deployment on Operation Granby, was commanding a troop of three tanks of D Squadron on the extreme right of the regimental battle group when, during a halt, he observed an Iraqi position that appeared to be well manned, active and defended. Ordered to attack it with his tank and with infantry in close support, he led the infantry safely onto the Iraqi position, indicating its centre by engaging it with tracer rounds from his tank's coaxial machine gun, and remained exposed to incoming small-arms fire for forty-five minutes while calmly assisting and directing the infantry. The neutralising of the Iraqi position was carried out without delaying the battle group's advance and allowed the logistics units following behind to move safely through the area. Telfer was awarded the Military Cross for displaying, as the decoration's citation put it, 'clear headed courage in the attack out of all proportion to his age and experience'. On the same night, in another part of the desert and after having his tank break down in the initial part of the advance, Corporal Kenneth Anderson of C Squadron – while attempting to rendezvous with his squadron in company with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers personnel who had carried out the repairs to his tank – made contact with entrenched parties of Iraqi soldiers who seemed reluctant to surrender, even when rounds from his tank's coaxial machine gun were fired over their heads. Unknown to Anderson, the Iraqis' position was an objective for the 4th Armoured Brigade, which had not yet reached it, and was shortly due to receive intense artillery bombardment in preparation for its capture. Anderson dismounted from his tank and at considerable personal risk, through a combination of both bluff and determined persuasion, persuaded twenty-four Iraqis to surrender to him, while the remainder fled. Anderson was awarded the Military Medal, the citation for which read: 'As a direct result of his determination to persuade the enemy to surrender, he effectively captured a company strength position with one tank and one personnel carrier. He also prevented the bloodshed that the artillery would have wrought had the position not already been vacated'.

The regiment's part in the Gulf War was over by the end of February 1991, when Kuwait was liberated. On 16 March 1991, personnel flew back to Germany, to return to Fallingbostel and, it was assumed, to the normalities of soldiering as part of BAOR, albeit with the continuing uncertainties surrounding not only the future of Germany but also that of the Royal Armoured Corps in the light of 'Options for Change'. Under 'Options', the regiment escaped the amalgamations that reduced the number of regiments in the RAC from nineteen to eleven but an unexpected effect of the amalgamations was the requirement to return to Britain in July 1992 to fulfil a training and support role within the RAC, being initially based at the RAC Centre at Bovington in Dorset and Catterick Camp in Yorkshire. The move from Fallingbostel was accomplished over four days at the end of July 1992. For almost the next three years, the regiment was divided between Catterick, where, initially, three squadrons began by forming the Basic Military Training Unit; Bovington, where one squadron was based, and Warminster in Wiltshire, where one squadron worked within the Demonstration Battle Group; latterly, a squadron was based at the Gunnery Training School at Lulworth on the Dorset coast. During its three years in Britain, the regiment worked at training recruits, training soldiers and occasionally at training itself – despite being officially classed as non-operational while being the RAC's training regiment.


COUNTRY LIFE
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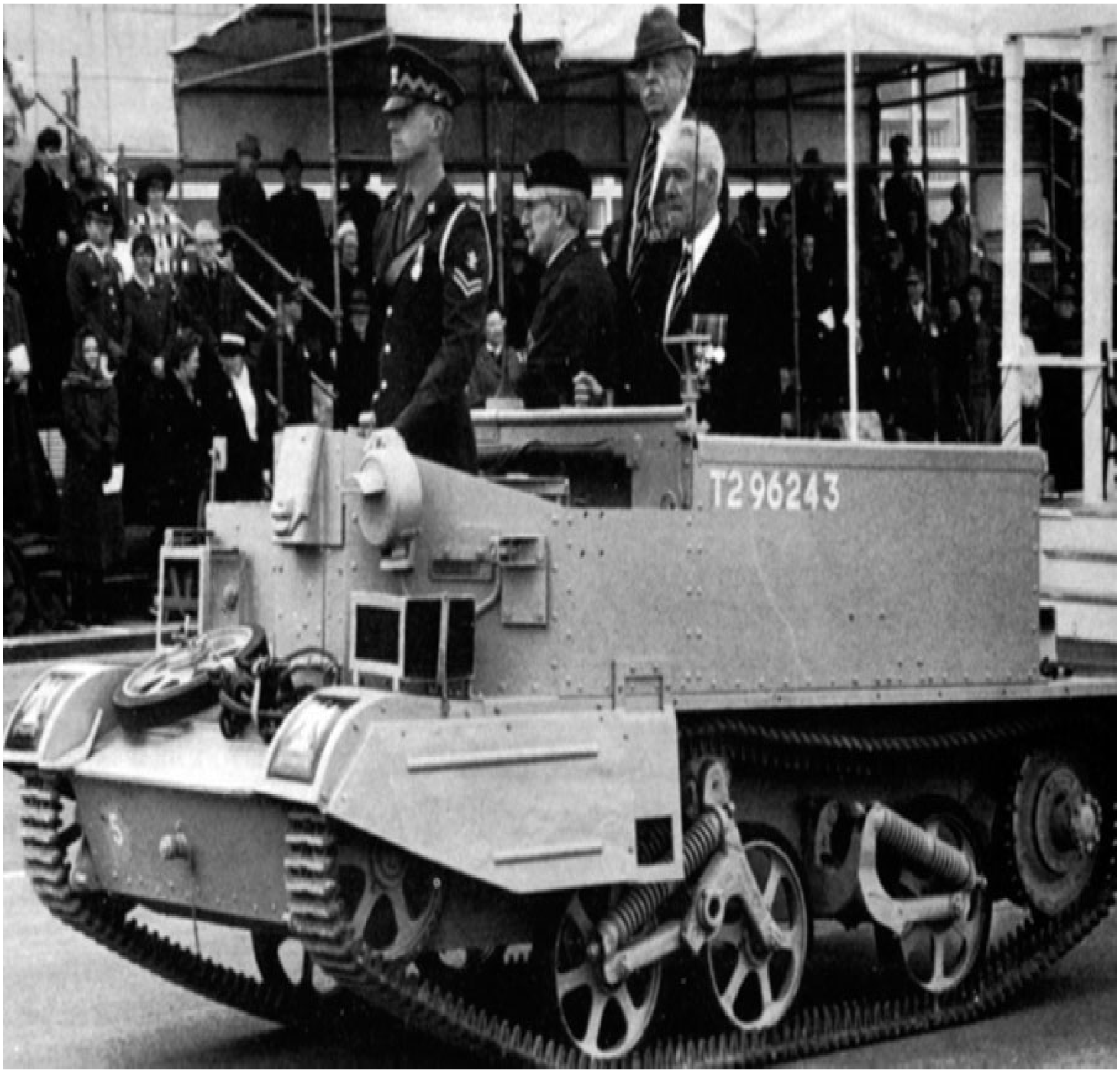
During the regiment's tour in Catterick 1992–95, Major Tony Crease set up a nature reserve on Ministry of Defence land adjoining the barracks. Since then, Foxglove Covert has received statutory designation, has been visited by more than 600,000 people (including royalty), and won numerous awards for its outstanding contribution to conservation and community engagement.



A Second World War Universal, or Bren, Carrier on the parade to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Nunshigum, April 1994 at Bovington Camp, Dorset. Left to right: Corporal Neil Mogey and veterans of the battle Arthur Freer, 'Dickie' Teese and George Gushlow.

During the period that the regiment was in Britain, on 3 December 1993, HM The Queen, Colonel-in-Chief, appointed her cousin, Field Marshal HRH

The Duke of Kent, to be the regiment's Deputy Colonel-in-Chief. The Duke, known to many in the regiment as Prince Edward, had been commissioned into the Royal Scots Greys in 1955 and served into the 1970s, retiring from the army in 1976.

In 1994, as a result of continuing reductions in the defence budget, the regiment's band was incorporated into a central band called The Band of Her Majesty's Dragoon Guards and D Squadron was placed in suspended animation. Any effects of these cuts upon the regiment's morale were counterbalanced by the unification of the whole regiment on 13 April on parade at Bovington to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Nunshigum and again in July at Catterick in preparation for an operation fittingly called Scotland 94: Coming Home. Coming Home involved the regiment during August and September in successfully publicising its continued existence and association with Scotland through a number of high-profile activities. These included spectacular participation in the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, a nineteen-day march through the country by a specially formed mounted troop and the presentation of a new regimental standard by the Queen in Edinburgh on 30 September that year. At the tattoo, the Mounted Troop appeared with men from the Gordon Highlanders to portray the two regiments' legendary involvement with each other at the battle of Waterloo, 1815. The Mounted Troop, in a sixtieth-anniversary commemoration of the regiment's mounted recruiting march of 1934, covered 693 miles through Scotland and was present at twenty-one public events, including the Royal Highland Gathering at Braemar, several Beatings to Quarters and the Ayr Races for the Gold Cup meeting. The new regimental standard was presented on a blustery day in the park of Holyroodhouse and incorporated the newly won battle honour recognising the regiment's participation in the Gulf War – 'Gulf 1991'. Almost immediately after the standard parade, the regiment flew to Canada to go on exercise at BATUS, being warned that, in 1995, it would return to Germany as the first regiment to receive the new Challenger 2 tank.

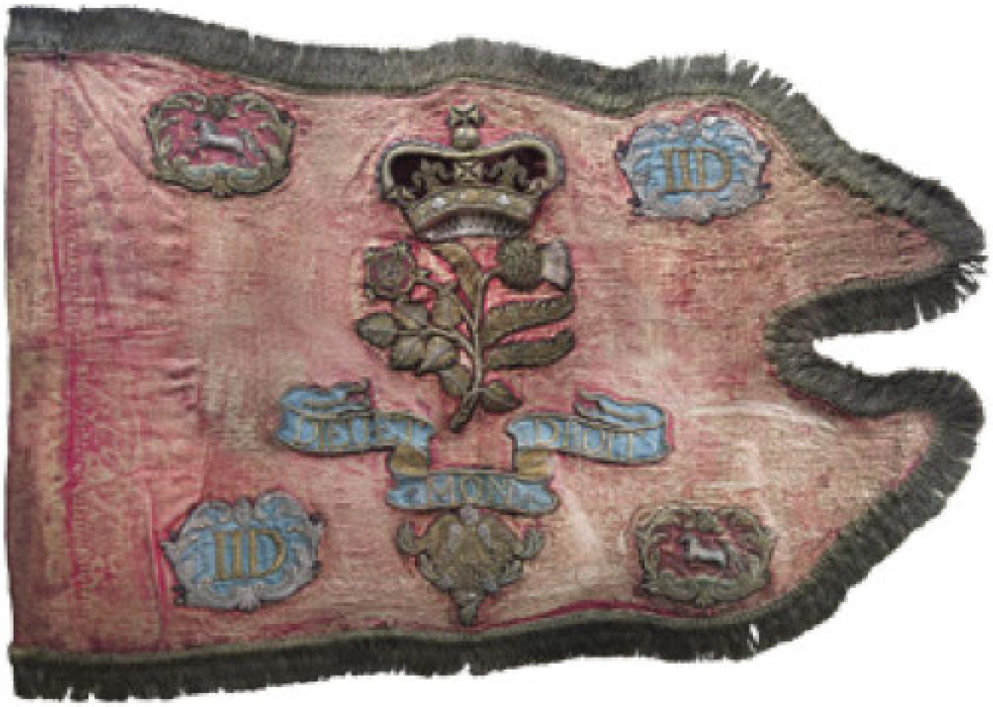
HM The Queen inspecting the Regimental Association, before presenting the new standard to the regiment in Holyrood Park, 30 September 1994.

The Mounted Troop in Glen Tilt during the march to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the regiment’s mounted recruiting march in 1934.

British cavalry flags are either standards or guidons. Standards, which are square or rectangular, were carried by regiments of horse; guidons, which are swallow-tailed, were carried by regiments of dragoons. When the regiments of horse were converted to dragoons – but called dragoon guards – in 1746 and 1788, the converted regiments carried a Sovereign’s (or first) standard together with regimental guidons, thus denoting both their former and their new status; this practice continued until 1844, after which standards alone were carried until 1858. To accompany the Sovereign’s (or first) standard, or guidon, the other regimental flags were allocated in quantities, and by squadron, depending upon the size of the regiment at the time of allocation: wartime augmentations led to regiments having more flags as the number of squadrons increased. Most regiments generally had at least three flags until 1858, when the allocation changed to one flag per regiment. The current flag-staff finial, in the form of the Royal Crest for England, also dates from 1858; hitherto, it had been one of several varieties of spear-point, one example associated with the Greys from 1848 incorporating the saltire of St Andrew pierced within the spear-head.

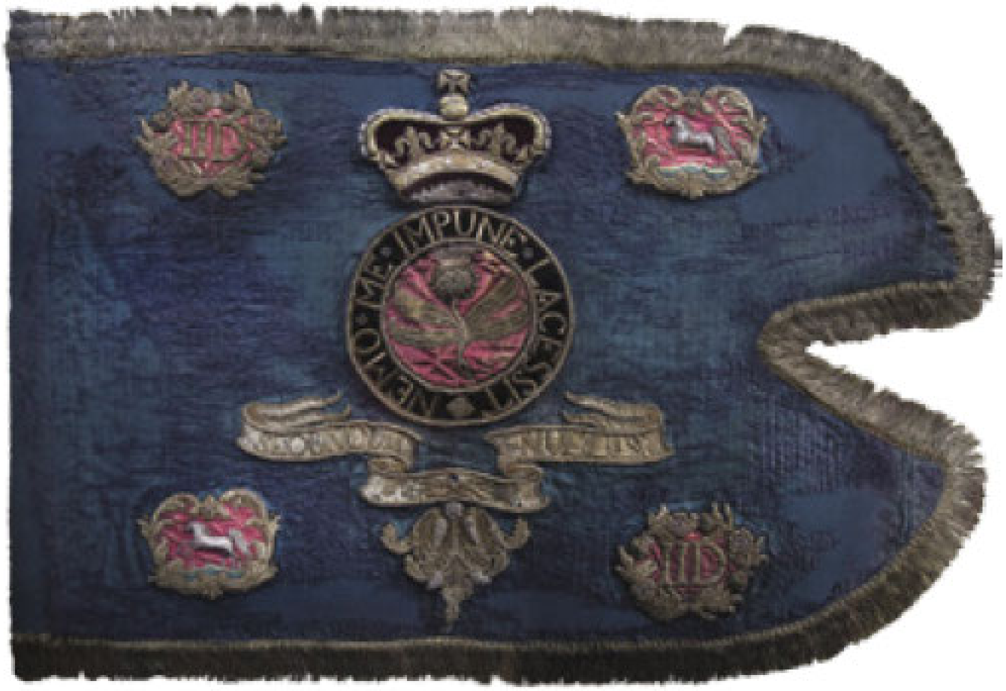
After 1747, the first standard, or guidon, had a crimson ground and the regimental guidons had grounds of the relevant regimental facing colour; the standards and guidons of dragoon guards were of damask silk and the guidons of dragoons of plain silk. The decoration of the first

standard, or guidon, deliberately reflected the fact that the regiments were their sovereign’s, and not their colonels’, property: the principal decoration was a crowned Union badge – a rose and thistle on a single stalk – and the royal motto ‘Dieu et Mon Droit’. The second and third regimental guidons bore regimental badges and mottoes, or the regimental number and designation, as their principal decoration and all regimental flags bore the White Horse of Hanover courant as well as Union wreaths of roses and thistles. This essential style of form and decoration remained constant until well into the 19th century, although in 1801 a shamrock (signifying the Act of Union with Ireland) was added to the Union badge and Union wreaths.



The Sovereign’s (or first) guidon of the 2nd Dragoons c. 1785. This and the second guidon are connected with General David Home (1732–1809), who served in 2nd Dragoons 1754–1802 and commanded the regiment 1779–93. (Private collection)

The earliest regimental flags recorded are those of the Earl of Plymouth’s Horse (later 3rd Dragoon Guards) and The Queen Dowager’s Horse (later 6th Dragoon Guards) in 1687. Both regiments carried green damask silk standards, Plymouth’s being plain and the Queen Dowager’s being decorated with her cypher: two letters C addorsed and interlaced, with a crown above. For the next sixty years, the regiments’ flags would probably have borne the armorial bearings of the regiments’ colonels as decoration but this practice was abolished in 1747. After 1765 and its acquisition of the subtitle ‘or The Prince of Wales’s’, the regimental guidons of 3rd Dragoon Guards were decorated with the iconography associated with the Prince of Wales; a third guidon of the regiment from c. 1780 bears the Prince’s badge above the designation ‘III·DG’ on a white damask silk ground.



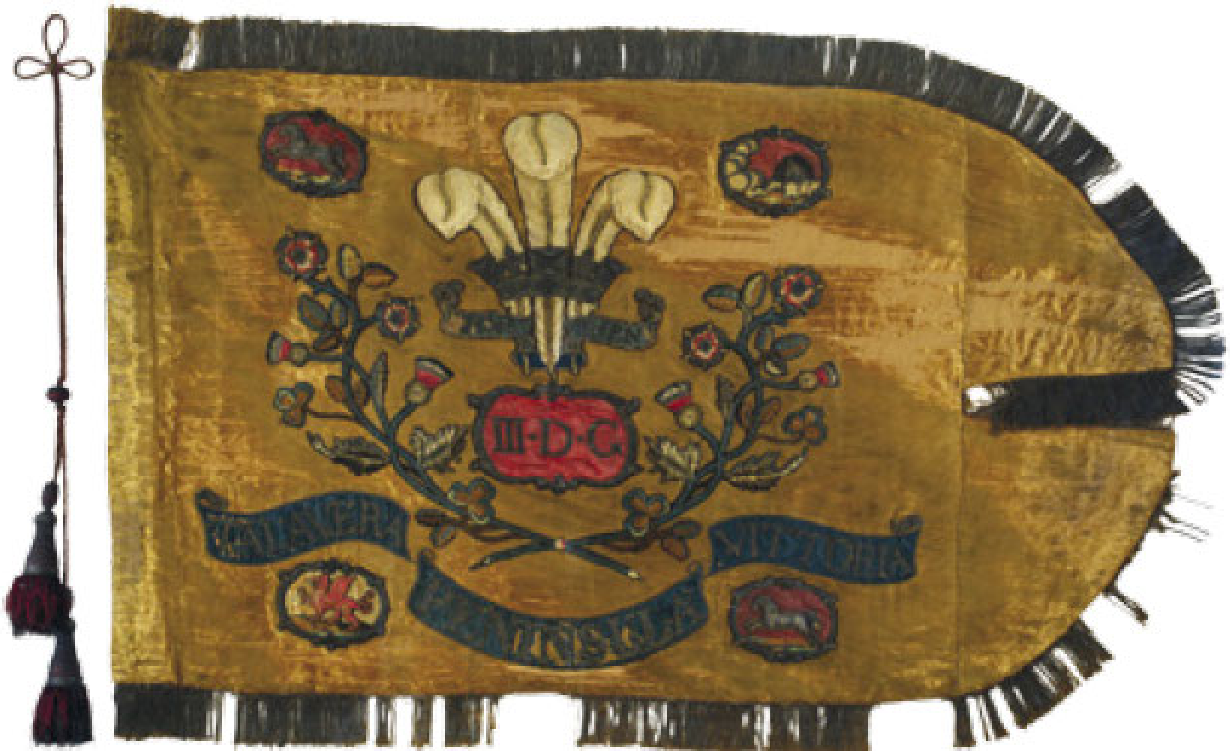
The second guidon of the 2nd Dragoons c. 1785. (Private collection)

Battle honours first appeared in quantity on British cavalry flags after 1801. ‘Peninsula’ and ‘Waterloo’ were the first battle honours to appear

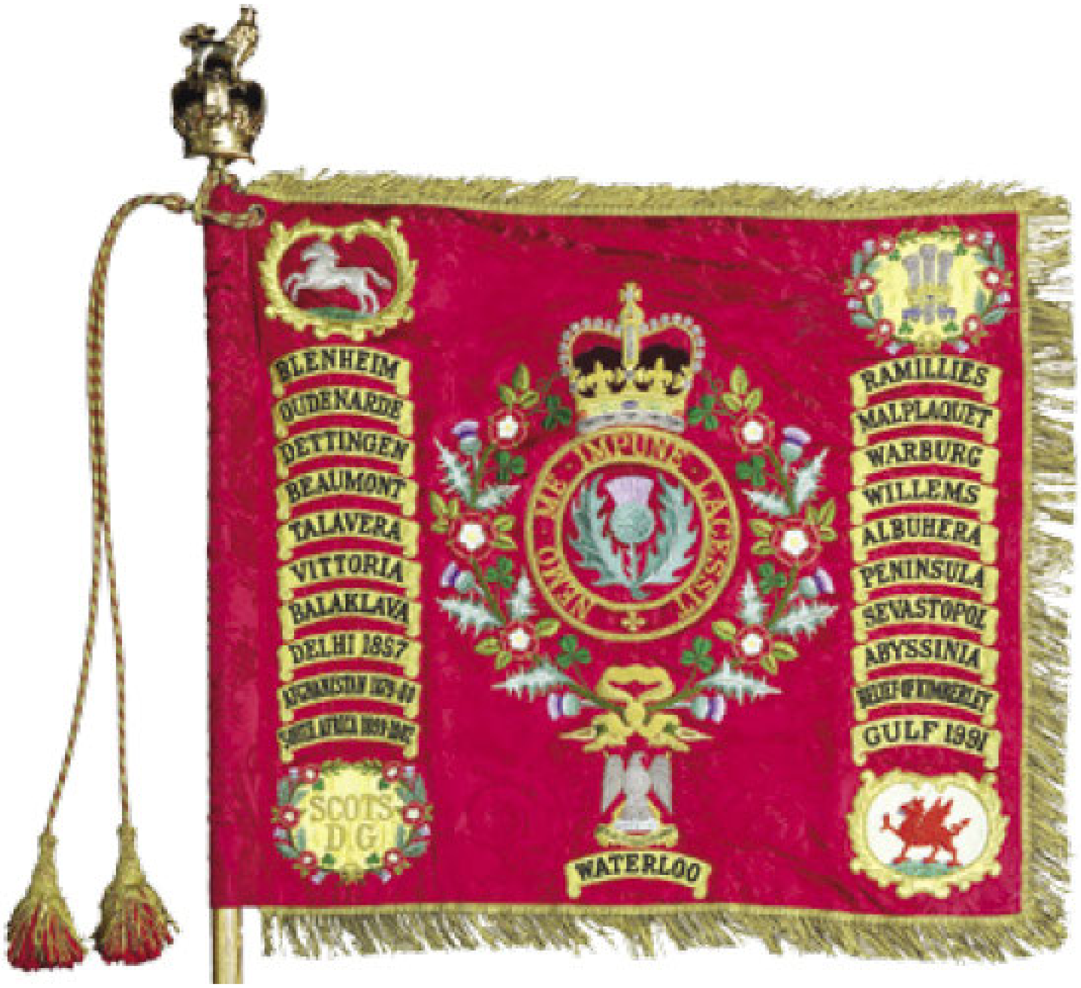
on the regiments' flags, the former being granted to 3rd Dragoon Guards in March 1815 and the latter to 2nd Dragoons in November 1815. The 3rd Dragoon Guards' second guidon of the period 1826–37 (see right) indicates how this new practice of adding battle honours affected the regiment:, the battle honour 'Peninsula' together with 'Talavera' and 'Vittoria', awarded in May 1826, are shown but not 'Albuhera', awarded in April 1837. As the number of battle honours awarded increased through the 19th and 20th centuries, cavalry flags became unable to accommodate them all; from this arose the practice of selecting the battle honours to be borne and so, on the current regimental standard only fifty of the ninety-two battle honours are borne.

Until 1796, the flags were carried by cornets – the lowest rank of cavalry commissioned officer – but were subsequently carried by senior NCOs and, after 1822, by troop sergeant-majors; in the regiment today, the standard is carried by the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant, escorted by two senior NCOs. Although flags were carried on campaign throughout the 18th century, the practice had ceased by the beginning of the Peninsular War in 1808 and so, contrary to romantic portrayals of the battle, the Greys did not carry guidons at Waterloo in 1815.

Roger Binks and Stephen Wood



3rd Dragoon Guards’ second guidon, 1826–37.


BLENHEIM
OUDENARDE
DETTINGEN
BEAUMONT
TALAVERA
VITTORIA
BALAKLAVA
DELHI 1857
AFGHANISTAN 1879-80
SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902
SCOTS D G
NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT
WATERLOO
RAMILLIES
MALPLAQUET
WARBURG
WILLEMS
ALBUHERA
PENINSULA
SEVASTOPOL
ABYSSINIA
RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY
GULF 1991

The standard presented by HM The Queen on 30 September 1994.

At the opening of the new regimental museum on 3 July 1995: HM The Queen with (left to right) HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Lieutenant-General Sir Norman Arthur KCB and the Colonel, Major General Charles Ramsay CB OBE.

A Challenger 1 looks down over Mrkonjic Grad, Bosnia, April 1997.

If 1994 had been a fulfilling year, 1995 was rather the opposite. The move from Catterick to Wessex Barracks at Fallingbostel in May went smoothly but on arrival it was found that the accommodation was substandard. This unwelcome surprise accompanied the realisation that the army's status in Germany had changed to being that of guests – BAOR had ceased to exist in 1994 and was replaced by British Forces Germany – and that delivery of the Challenger 2 was to be delayed. The regiment found itself in a relatively unfamiliar political environment, without tanks and uncertain about its role and immediate future. At home, a positive note was struck in July by the opening of the regimental museum in Edinburgh Castle, in premises in the basement of the north end of the New Barracks. By the beginning of 1996, the delay to the arrival of the Challenger 2 was estimated to be of about a year but delivery was received of a number of Challenger 1s in order that tank training could proceed. During 1996, the whole regiment went to BATUS in detachments of varying size and at various times and evidence of the changed face of European politics was manifest in the form of a composite squadron training in Poland as part of a field training exercise (FTX).

The regiment's participation in another region affected by recent political changes in Europe came in December 1996 when, equipped with Challenger 1 Mk IIIs and some light-armoured reconnaissance vehicles, it deployed three newly formed squadrons to Bosnia as part of NATO's Stabilisation Force (SFOR). Organised specifically for the exigencies of the situation in Bosnia, where internecine conflict still smouldered below a newly peaceful surface, were an armoured squadron, an armoured reconnaissance squadron and an in-theatre support squadron; a fourth formed the rear party based in Fallingbostel. Peacekeeping was the task, to be peacefully achieved if possible, and this was carried out over a six-month period, the three squadrons returning to Fallingbostel in June 1997 having barely had to fire a shot in anger and with no casualties.

In April 1997 the Regimental Council approved the institution of a regimental award to be known, with the permission of the Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, as The Duke of Kent Medal. This medal, specified to be worn on the right breast and only on strictly regimental occasions, was instituted to reward those who, in the opinion of the Regimental Council, had rendered meritorious services to the regiment. The first awards were made by HRH The Duke of Kent at Wessex Barracks, Fallingbostel, on 30 October 1997.

Once back in Germany in mid-1997, the regiment's next task was to convert to the Challenger 2, delays in the delivery of which had been overcome. The qualities of this new main battle tank were widely praised and the regiment began taking delivery in January 1998; it was the first regiment to receive the new tank. During the same period, the Strategic Defence Review of 1997–98 was being conducted and its conclusions and recommendations were published in July 1998. Those findings affecting the regiment were that it would become a Type 58 armoured regiment: that change to the regiment's status would involve D Squadron being re-formed as soon as manpower levels allowed and the regiment's tank complement being set at fourteen tanks per squadron, with two additional tanks for Regimental Headquarters. After struggling with serious undermanning, constant uncertainties about its role and inferior equipment since the early 1990s, the advent of the

Challenger 2 and the increased regimental establishment combined to raise morale.

His Imperial Majesty Tsar Nicholas II was appointed in 1894 and remained Colonel-in-Chief of the Greys until his murder on 17 July 1918 at Yekaterinburg. His body was discovered in an unmarked grave in 1991 along with the remains of his family and staff and as Second-in-Command I had wondered how the regiment might have a role in the reburial. The re-interment was delayed for a few years, not least because President Yeltsin feared a backlash from diehard communists opposed to his pro-Western stance. The date was finally set for 17 July 1998 – the 80th anniversary of the Tsar's murder.

As the relatively new Commanding Officer, I dusted off my previous correspondence and the Adjutant, Captain Dougie Allen, and Second-in-Command, Major Mark Ravnkilde, set about planning our involvement. We would send a party of four: the Second-in-Command, Regimental Sergeant-Major George Cochlan, Pipe Major Bryon Brotherton and me. Few, if any, invitations were sent beforehand by the Russian authorities because the reburial was originally intended to be a low-key family affair with very little state involvement. Instead, we relied on the diplomatic skills of Major Nigel Dunkley at the British Embassy in Bonn and the Consul General in St Petersburg, Mr John Guy. Despite their endeavours and those of the adjutant working with the Russian Consul General at Hamburg, and despite having an invitation from the British Embassy in Moscow, we were unable to get visas for our trip. The MOD did, however, give political clearance provided it was made clear that we were acting in a 'private capacity'. We decided to go and left Hamburg for St Petersburg on Wednesday 15

July in an aged Aeroflot Ilyushin now repainted in Pulkovo livery, with an assortment of clothing, no programme and no visas.

The sterling efforts of our Consul General at St Petersburg got us visas at the airport, but no amount of pleading could persuade the customs officers not to confiscate our swords and the Pipe Major's dirk.

Accompanied by a guide and an interpreter we set off for the Fortress, where it was obvious that we were expected to play a part in the ceremony at the Peter and Paul Cathedral and we conducted innumerable rehearsals with the Russian 100-man State Guard of Honour, who were most welcoming. The cathedral is a magnificent building, where every tsar since Peter the Great lies buried. The involvement of the State Guard of Honour and President Yeltsin's last-minute decision to attend meant that the ceremonies were now far from 'low-key'.

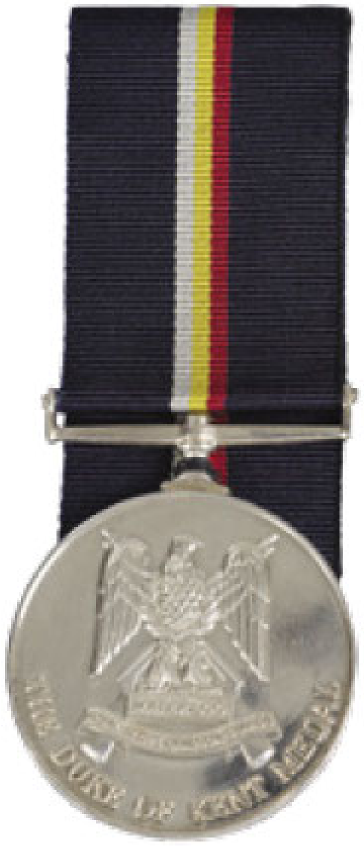
The following day our party (in No. 1 Dress complete with the swords that the Consul General had managed to prise from customs at the eleventh hour) stood with the guard of honour as the aeroplane carrying the coffins of the Tsar and Tsarina arrived at St Petersburg. At the Fortress, we marched in slow time behind the guard of honour and in front of the pallbearers. As the coffins were taken into the cathedral the Pipe Major played 'Going Home'. The cathedral bells then began to peal a 16th-century funeral chime that signals the final moments in life, ending in one strong strike symbolising the point at which the spirit leaves the body and enters into God's hands. It was ironic that these bells, which had been made by order of HIM Tsar Nicholas II in 1905, would, almost a century later, ring at his final interment.

We then joined the Romanov family inside the cathedral for a short service. The singing of the Orthodox choir will remain in our memories for a long time. Once the Romanovs had gone forward and paid their respects at the coffins, we each walked down the aisle, halted and saluted before leaving the cathedral. With President Yeltsin's attendance there would be no room for us at the reburial ceremony the next day so we followed in Major Hippisley's footsteps and visited the Alexander and Catherine Palaces at Tsarskoye Selo.

That evening we were invited by Sacha Hamilton, Duchess of Abercorn, a descendant of Alexander Pushkin, to join her party for an after-dinner drink. We arrived at the canal-side restaurant on a barge with the Pipe Major playing. The party included Prince Nicholas Romanov as well as HRH Prince Michael of Kent – who speaks Russian and bears an uncanny resemblance to the late Tsar. 'Pipey' performed in the restaurant for most of the evening to much applause and we drank Pol Roger champagne while the Spetsnaz stood guard. The Cold War had definitely ended.

The Secretary of State for Defence had not been briefed about our visit and no one in his department seemed to be aware of it until they read the newspapers: it appears that the MOD desk officer had not mentioned that political clearance had been given. I had a certain amount of explaining to do on my return.

Andrew Phillips


THE DUKE OF KENT MEDAL

The Duke of Kent medal.

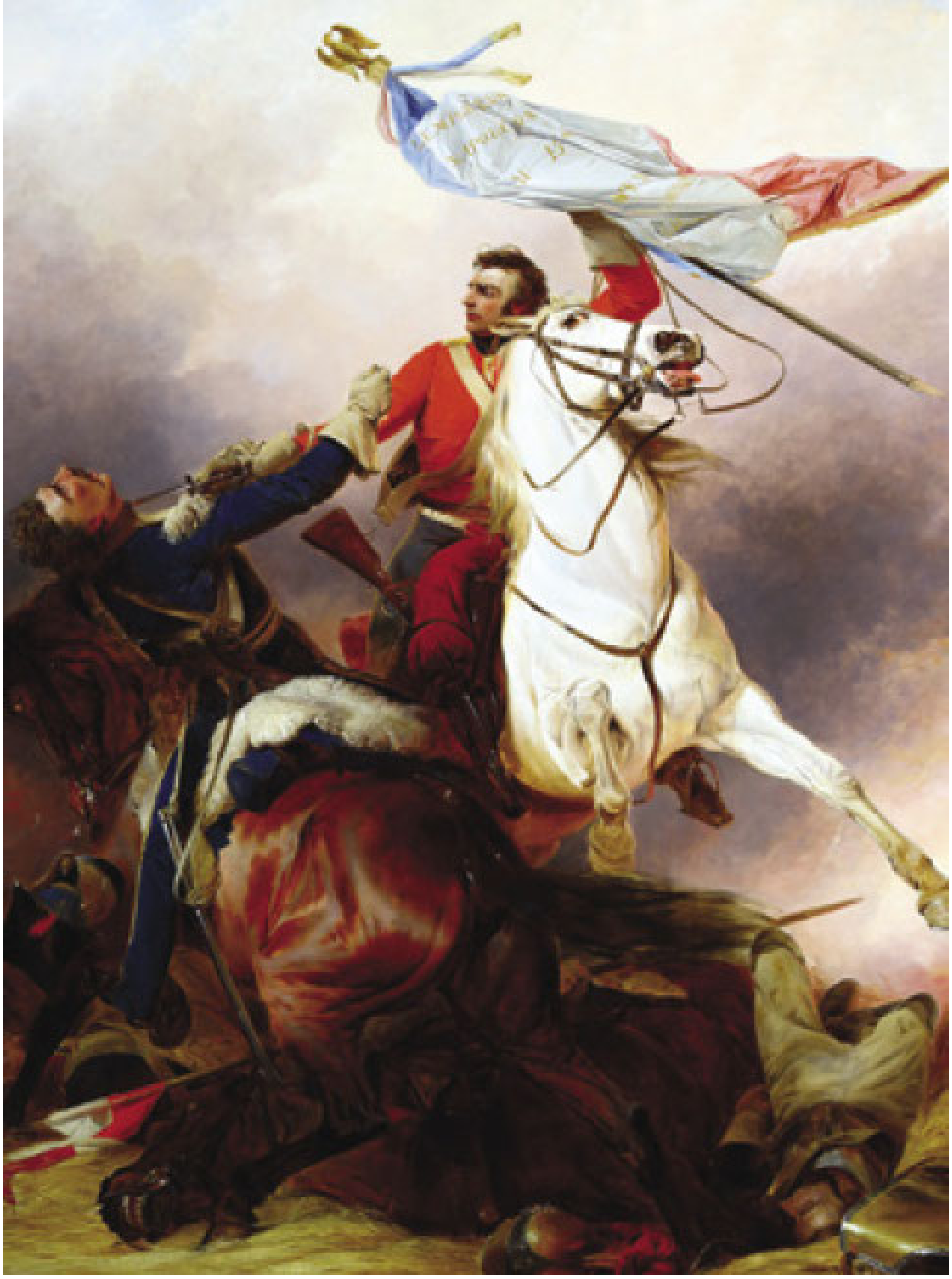
A Challenger 2 tank of the regiment on the prairie at BATUS, 1999.

In all the concentration on the regiment's present in 1998, sight was not lost of its past. In June 1998, a huge painting from the mid-19th century, with a chequered past but redolent of the Greys' history, was hung in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle: Richard Ansdell's The Fight for the Standard (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1848) depicts Sergeant Charles Ewart of the Greys defending his captured French standard at the battle of Waterloo. In July, a small party from the regiment attended the ceremony of reburial of the remains of the last tsar, the Greys' first Colonel-in-Chief, in St Petersburg.

Major Henry Cummins on mounted patrol near Podujevo, Kosovo, 2000.

The year 1999 was spent in a variety of training exercises with the regiment’s new tank; these took place at BATUS, in Germany and in Poland and culminated in a Brigade FTX in Poland – an event that would have been unthinkable a decade previously. Early in 2000 the regiment embarked upon training for peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and in February it departed for a six-month tour to that newly created and United Nations-administered Balkan region.

Like Bosnia, Kosovo had emerged from the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991 following the death of the Yugoslav president, Josip Tito, in 1980. The regiment acquired the role of UK Battle Group 2 within the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) during its tour of duty. In the case of Kosovo, ‘peacekeeping’ involved keeping the ethnic Albanian and Serb populations from each other’s throats at a time when the Kosovo Albanians were pressing for an independent state and the Serbs were resisting this. The regiment’s A and C Squadrons served dismounted in Kosovo, while B and HQ Squadron retained their differing armoured capabilities and were based with the other regiments under command in and around Podujevo. Peacekeeping in Kosovo in 2000 required a steady hand since the Albanian Kosovo Protection Corps was perceived as a serious threat to peace in the region; notable successes in curbing its activities were achieved when huge arms caches were discovered and removed.



The Fight for the Standard; oil on canvas copy of his original painting by Richard Ansdell RA. In 1910, in accordance with his father's wishes, Ansdell's son presented the original (c. 1848) to the Royal Hospital Chelsea. In 1954, this huge painting (measuring 13 by 11 feet) was lent to the Scottish United Services Museum (now the National War Museum of Scotland) in Edinburgh Castle. In 1970 it was hung in the Palace Block where, a year later, it was damaged by a terrorist bomb. After many years

with the Conservation Section of the agency Historic Scotland, and the agreement of the artist's family to a permanent loan, it was re-hung in the castle's Great Hall in 1998 and unveiled by HRH The Duke of Kent. The regiment's rather smaller copy was presented by James Baird of Elie.

Returning to Fallingbostel in August 2000, the regiment sent a large recruiting party to Scotland at the end of September and expectations were high that the young men recruited would enable the formation of D Squadron in the near future. In the spring of 2001, training was undertaken for a return to Kosovo but before that deployment, at a ceremony in Hyde Park, London, on 10 May, the Queen presented the regiment with a new drum horse, Talavera. On 24 May Her Majesty visited the regiment in Fallingbostel and a month later, on 26 June 2001, the regiment deployed to Kosovo for its second tour. The tour involved much the same activities as the previous tour, with the added but unrealised possibility of becoming involved in operations in nearby Macedonia.

Lance Corporal Paul Miller (Green Howards), Trooper Chris Hegarty and Trooper Colin Jackson on the northern border of Kosovo with Serbia in 2001.

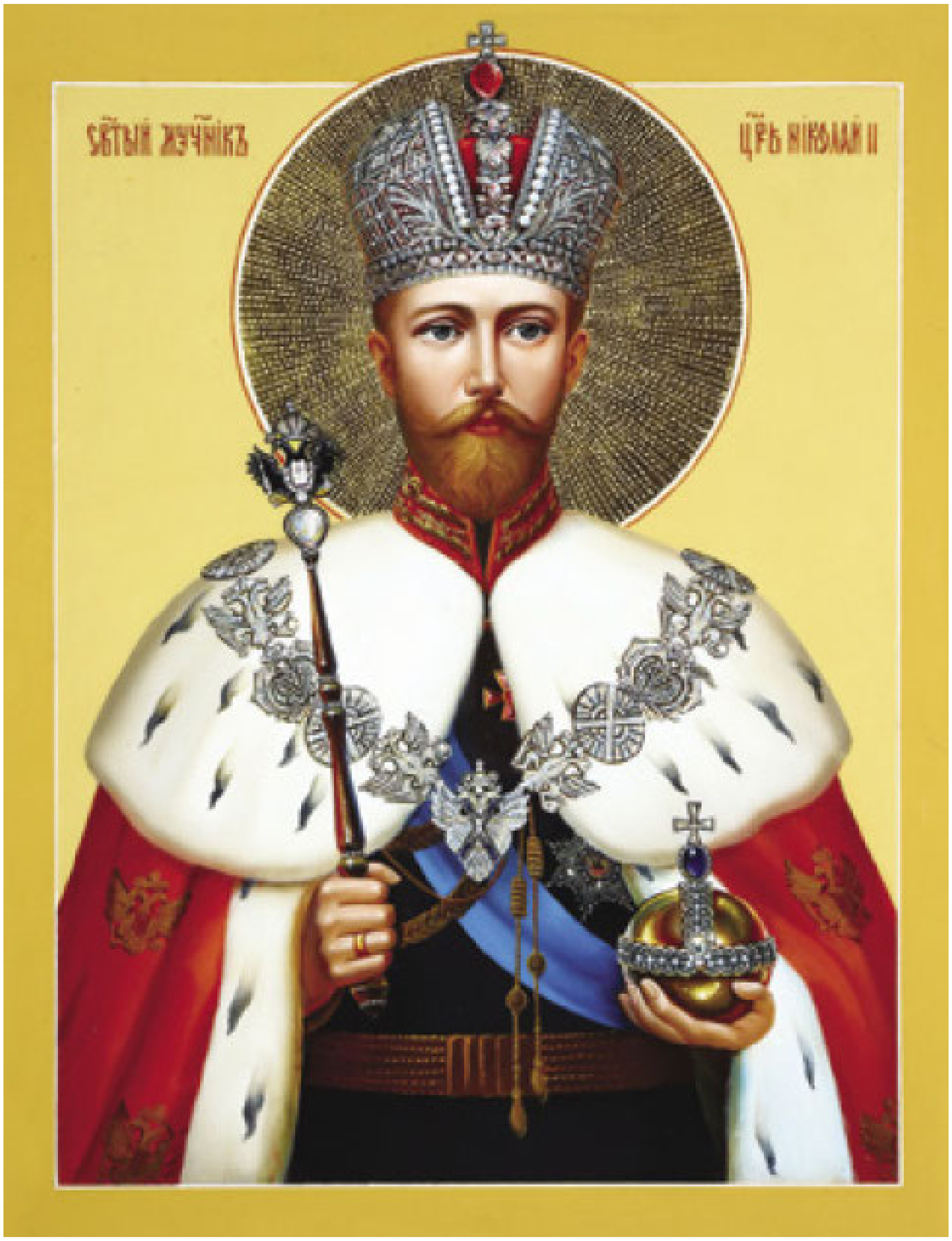
While the regiment was peacekeeping in Kosovo, on 24 August 2001 a delegation from the Caledonian Society of Moscow presented an icon of the last tsar to the Colonel of the Regiment, Major General Jonathan Hall CB OBE, at a ceremony in Edinburgh Castle: the icon was ultimately passed to the regiment to accompany it on future operations. Following the regiment's return from Kosovo in October 2001, the remainder of the year was passed in training in Fallingbostel but at the end of the year, so successful had recruiting been, D Squadron was finally re-formed, its initial role being as the regiment's reconnaissance squadron.

HM The Queen presented the new drum horse Talavera at a ceremony in Hyde Park, London, on 10 May 2001.

The early part of 2002 was spent training in Germany, the type of training reflecting the constant need for versatility of role for the regiment; thus, soldiers were trained in small-arms use as much as in field firing and troop-training on Bergen-Hohne and Sennelager. In April the regiment moved to BATUS for battle group exercises, in June it celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee back in Germany and in July and August, under the title 'Scotland Forever', a sizeable recruiting party was sent to Scotland.

In August, too, a party of one hundred officers and men worked with the German emergency services in stemming the floods generated when the River Elbe burst its banks and inundated large areas in the region of Luchow-Dannenberg, south-east of Hamburg. By the autumn of 2002, plans were being made to use detachments from the regiment to work in aid of the civil power in Britain during a planned strike by firemen but these were shelved when it became evident that another conflict in the Middle East was brewing and that the regiment, within the 7th Armoured Brigade, would probably be needed.

The regiment's third deployment to the Gulf region in little more than forty years resulted from attacks on the Pentagon, near Washington DC, and on the World Trade Center in New York City on 11 September 2001. These had been perpetrated by the Islamist terrorist organisation al-Qaeda which, centred at that time upon Taleban-controlled Afghanistan, had carried out assassinations and bombings in Asia, Africa and the Middle East during the 1990s. The government of the USA believed that al-Qaeda had received support, shelter and encouragement from the Iraqi government. In addition, American and British Intelligence reports suggested to their respective governments that the Iraqis had stockpiled 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMDs) – nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, together with their delivery systems – for attacks upon Israel, allies of the West in the Arabian peninsula (such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) and Western nations. An initial American-led campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 having apparently succeeded in seriously weakening the hold of the Taleban, and thus al-Qaeda, in that country, the American government decided that Iraq was the next legitimate target in what became popularly known as the 'War on Terror'. The British government acceded to this view and, on 20 January 2003, announced that, amongst other British land forces, the 7th Armoured Brigade would shortly deploy to Kuwait for potential operations against Iraq. The operation was codenamed Telic by the Ministry of Defence, ‘telic’ being an adjective derived from Greek signifying a definite end or purpose to something; some wags in the MOD apparently suggested that it was an acronym for ‘Tell Everyone Leave Is Cancelled’. Retrospectively, following subsequent British operational deployments in postwar Iraq, the Iraq War of 2003 would become known as Telic 1; each subsequent deployment was codenamed Telic but with added numerals denoting successive ‘roulements’ (rotations) of British troops as attempts were made to stabilise the country.


СВ҃ТЫЙ МУЧ҃НИКЪ
Ц҃РЬ НИКОЛАЙ II

Icon of Tsar Nicholas II presented to the regiment by the Caledonian Society of Moscow, 24 August 2001.

A Challenger 2 lost in the crowds in the Princes Street cavalcade 2002; the Scots Greys' war memorial can be seen in the background.

The regiment contributed significantly to two of the four battle groups within the 7th Armoured Brigade. The Black Watch Battle Group included A Squadron, while B and C Squadrons formed the armoured element of the regimental battle group, with two companies from the 1st Battalion, the Irish Guards as its infantry component; D Squadron was subsumed into the other sabre squadrons for the duration of the operation. The regiment's tanks and other vehicles left Germany during the second week of February 2003 and personnel flew to Kuwait during the first ten days of March. By mid-March, the tanks had arrived, live firing was being undertaken and additional armour was being fitted; on 22 March the first elements of the regiment entered Iraq.

Each of the three sabre squadrons experienced the war slightly differently. For A Squadron, acting in support of the Black Watch's infantry companies, the campaign initially involved taking up blocking positions outside the town of Az Zubayr, south-west of Basra, in order to prevent enemy escaping from the town while it was attacked in an infantry-led assault; subsequently, the squadron provided close fire support to the Black Watch in ferocious street-fighting in the town. On the evening of 28 March, while in leaguer, the squadron came under rocket attack and sustained two casualties – Troopers Barry Newlands and Iosefa Radredre (a Fijian) – but, early on the following day, eleven tanks, together with a Black Watch platoon, spearheaded the battle group's first attack on Basra.

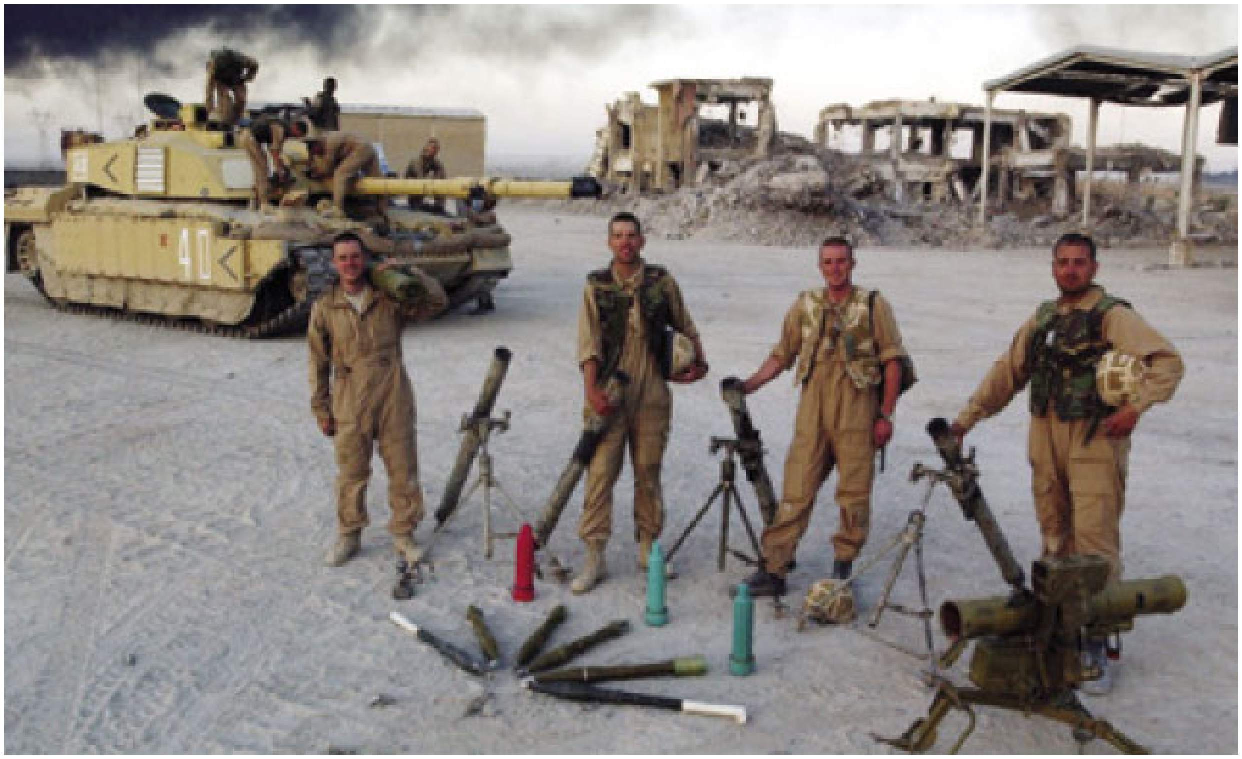
At that early stage in the war, overwhelming demonstrations of military might were considered necessary in order to undermine the effectiveness of the Iraqi regime's propaganda and, despite their limitations for intensive or prolonged urban conflict, A Squadron's Challenger 2s were ideal for the purpose. Fighting their way into and out of the city through intensive fire from small-arms and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), A Squadron's tanks had three objectives: one symbolic and two tactical. A large and prominently placed cast-iron statue of the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, was destroyed by a single High Explosive Squash Head (HESH) round. HESH rounds and coaxial machine-gun fire were also used to reduce to rubble a building used by the Fedayeen – fanatical guerrilla fighters with a reputation for extreme brutality who had suppressed all resistance to the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in Basra: reducing Fedayeen influence and numbers had great tactical importance. A communications mast, via which Iraqi state radio and television had been continuing to broadcast misleading stories about Iraqi successes and Coalition defeats, was felled by pinpoint-accurate shooting using Armour Piercing Fin-Stabilized Discarding Sabot (APFSDS, or 'Fin') rounds. The strikes into Basra were wholly successful, no casualties were sustained and the tanks emerged relatively unscathed. The squadron struck deep into Basra again on 6 April as part of a battle group attack on the north of the city but was withdrawn after a few days to rejoin the remainder of the regiment at Shaibah airfield, south-west of Basra, as the assault on the city wound down and became a policing operation.

B Squadron on the practice range in Kuwait in March 2003 prior to the invasion of Iraq. (Mirrorpix)

B Squadron's war was largely centred upon Basra, initially on 23 and 24 March – together with C Squadron – as part of a 'blocking' deployment north of the city to relieve a lightly armoured squadron of the Queen's Dragoon Guards. This was followed by a week within the brigade reserve stationed at Shaibah airfield before the squadron, with the regimental battle group, moved closer to the city in preparation for its assault and capture. As part of a preliminary softening-up process, Iraqi positions were bombarded daily; in what became an attritional, if unequal, exchange of fire, the battle group sustained little or no damage. At the same time, from 31 March, individual troops from B Squadron began deployment in support of one or other of the regimental battle group's two companies of the Irish Guards in raids into the south-west of Basra; this activity was constant and involved the squadron's troops being in action, in one form or another, for very long days and nights. At the same time as conducting raids into the city, the squadron contributed to the battle group's control of its sector of Basra's perimeter, monitoring the movement of Iraqi vehicles – any of which could have contained a suicide bomber and have been packed with explosives – and responding aggressively to movements of Fedayeen.

Loading tanks with APFSDS ammunition in Kuwait in March 2003. (Mirrorpix)

Gradually, the pressure upon Basra increased. On 3 April the former Technical College was captured and became Regimental Battle Group Headquarters. On 5 and 6 April, major raids into the city were undertaken, supported by B Squadron, and an Iraqi T55 tank, having unsuccessfully engaged the tank of Captain Ranith De Silva, was destroyed. In the same period, concentrations of Iraqi resistance in and around the former College of Literature were engaged and gradually eliminated in a regimental battle group attack.



The regimental 'mortar section' with captured weapons. Left to right: Lance Corporal David Steel, Captain Alex Matheson, Lance Corporal Gordon Brown, Sergeant Allan Hainey. (Mirrorpix)

Recce Troop, waiting for the order to move, early morning, 22 March 2003. Left to right: Corporals James Taylor and John Rigby, Sergeant William (Dez) O'Connor. (© Aidan Stephen)

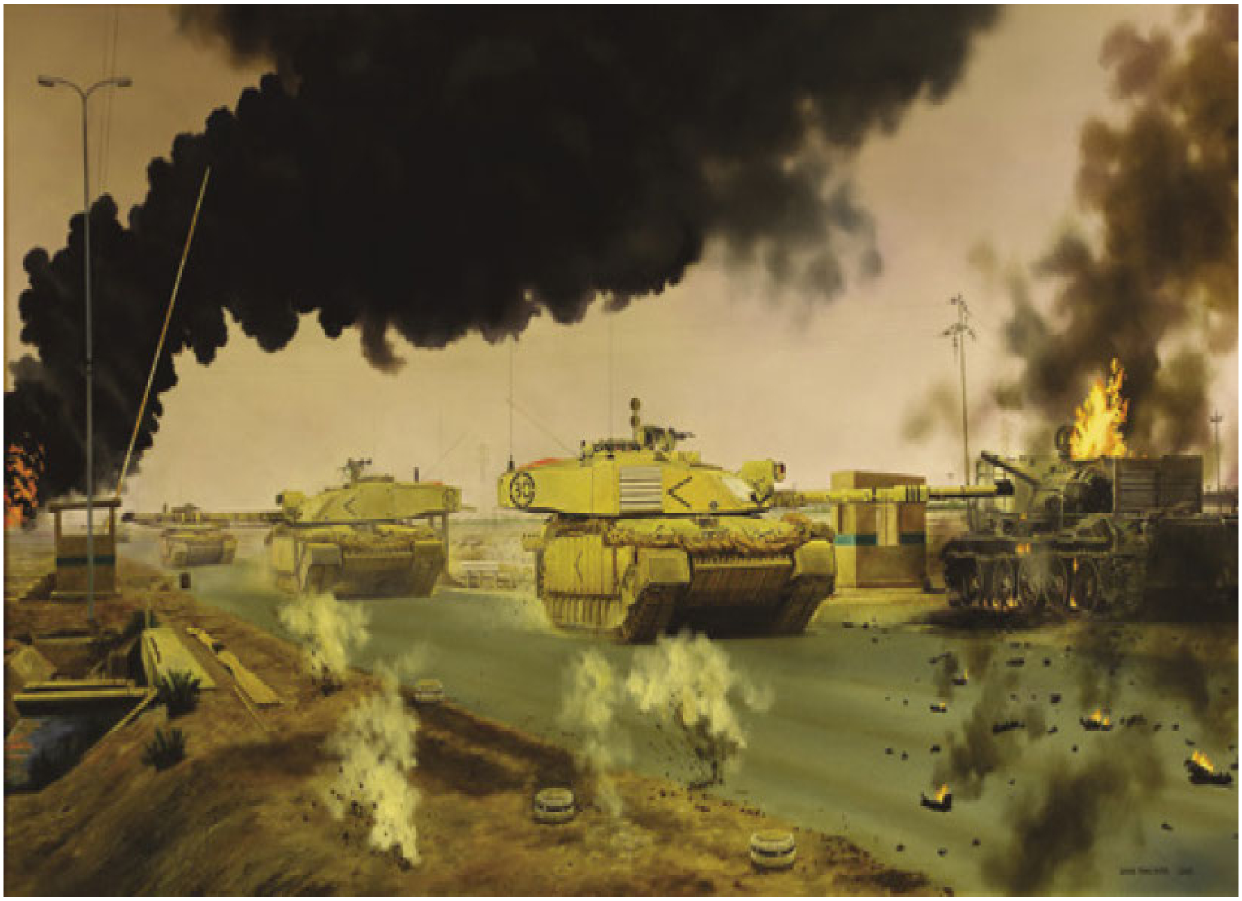
Iraqi resistance with small-arms, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades – however intensely deployed, well-aimed and courageously pressed home – proved inadequate when confronted by the immense destructive power of Challenger 2 main battle tanks, crewed and fought with discipline and determination, followed up by infantry assaults by the Irish Guards. The regimental battle group's attack on Basra from the south-west on 6 April was coordinated with that of the Black Watch Battle Group attack from the north that included A Squadron and, as the position was consolidated, so B Squadron withdrew, handing over to C Squadron. B Squadron's respite from battle was brief, however, and on 7 April its tanks supported companies from the 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment in their deployment to secure the central 'old town' of Basra. As Basra was secured, and as the brigade's role changed from that of soldiers to that of policemen, so, as with A Squadron, B Squadron was withdrawn and returned to Shaibah airfield.

C Squadron shared many of the experiences of B Squadron in the first days of the war but on 26 March was detached to go to the relief of 3 Commando Brigade which had assaulted the Al Faw peninsula, south-east of Basra, where strategically important Iraqi oil installations were sited. The Commando Brigade, the armoured component of which comprised only lightly armoured vehicles, was in danger of attack by Iraqi tanks and therefore required heavy armoured assistance: C Squadron's relief operation was, significantly, codenamed Operation Panzer (a German word for 'armour', now commonly used to mean 'tank'). The operation involved the movement of the squadron's fourteen Challenger 2s, with its heavy supporting elements, from the west of the Divisional sector to the east, through areas still believed to be in Iraqi hands and across the Shatt al-Arab waterway onto the Al Faw peninsula. The peninsula is a largely featureless area of wet salt marshes and treacherous mudflats far from ideal for the deployment of main battle tanks; in March 2003 it was known to be occupied by large Iraqi forces, including large numbers of tanks. Crossing the Shatt al-Arab involved the first operational use of the Royal Engineers' M3 rigs – powered aluminium pontoons on which the tanks were floated across the waterway; the squadron's crossing, though time-consuming, was made without mishap. For the 20-mile journey from the Shatt al-Arab to where the Commando Brigade was located, the squadron was divided into two sections of two troops each, to travel parallel to each other and to fight in mutual support if necessary. First contact with the enemy was made by 3rd Troop shortly after dawn on 27 March, when an Iraqi T55 was engaged and destroyed by a Fin round from Captain Fraser McLeman's tank. The tanks of 2nd and 3rd Troop were soon in action against entrenched Iraqi infantry, Fedayeen and more armour but arrived unscathed at the positions occupied by the most forward sections of 40 Commando, having destroyed seven T55s and six armoured personnel carriers in a rapid and running battle. Casualties among Iraqi infantry would have been proportionately heavy in the unequal contest between foot soldier and main battle tank and the squadron's other two troops, 1st and 4th, wrought havoc among groups of Fedayeen in and around a nearby industrial complex.

11B

Maintaining standards: the Commanding Officer's gunner, Corporal Steven Chart, takes the opportunity to shave; Iraq, April 2003. (Mirrorpix)

Lone tank; Sergeant Andrew Potter surveys the ruins, Basra, March 2003. (© Aidan Stephen)



3rd Troop, C Squadron, lead the advance through Objective Taku, 27 March 2003; right to left: Captain Fraser McLeman, Corporal Chris Ward, Sergeant Geoffrey Dudman; oil on canvas by David Rowlands (2005).

Following their successful engagements against Iraqi forces, C Squadron's four troops reunited and arrived in the brigade area at the end of a long, varied and exhausting day. C Squadron's presence significantly increased 3 Commando Brigade's striking capacity, so the squadron was retained as the brigade's objectives were rapidly reassessed in the light of this heavily armoured bonus; an operation which took place between 29 and 31 March, was the result. Codenamed James (after the fictional British spy, James Bond), the operation involved an all-arms assault into the south-eastern outer suburbs of Basra, centred upon the town of Abu al-Khasib, and would be the first time since the Second World War that units from the Royal Marines would fight alongside heavy armour – the regiment made history once again. Differing roles were assigned to the squadron's four troops: 2nd and 3rd Troop were to support differently constituted units of Royal Marines in attacking urban objectives, 1st Troop was to form a block against the incursion of enemy reinforcements and 4th Troop was to act in reserve. Iraqi resistance to 2nd Troop's Manoeuvre Support Group was considerable and concentrated, whereas 3rd Troop's co-unit, A Company 40 Commando, encountered little serious organised opposition. During intense fighting and under concentrated small-arms, mortar and RPG fire, one of 2nd Troop's tanks became stranded and bogged-down; the tank was eventually dragged clear and for their lengthy, sustained and brave efforts in defending and freeing the stranded tank while under fire, Corporals Jason Garrett and Justin Simons, part of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' Fitter Section, were subsequently mentioned in despatches. In contrast to that drama, during the same operation the three tanks of 3rd Troop destroyed fourteen Iraqi tanks in less than fourteen minutes; although the Iraqi tanks had been recently abandoned, they were still operational and thus posed a potential threat. 1st and 3rd Troop fought in support of 2nd Troop while the stranded tank was retrieved and 4th Troop ended the operation in support of Royal Marine units attaining and securing their objectives. Returning to the regimental battle group after Operation James, C Squadron moved to Shaibah airfield before participating in the capture of Basra on 6 April. After the fall of Basra – and following a period of policing in the city – the squadron returned to Shaibah, where the three sabre squadrons were reunited within the regimental battle group by 10 April.

LOTS OF LOVE
TO ALL OUR
MAMMYS
xxxx

Mother's Day greetings, 2003. (Mirrorpix)

On 11 April, the battle groups' orders of battle changed: A Squadron returned from the Black Watch Battle Group and was exchanged for the two companies of the Irish Guards, hitherto in the regimental battle group. The regiment's final task in Operation Telic was to maintain the security of Shaibah airfield and this was undertaken until 9 May when the regiment was stood down from operations in preparation for the return to Fallingbostel. Personnel flew back to Germany on 15/16 May, the tanks returning subsequently by ship, and D Squadron was reconstituted in July 2003. In 2005, the battle honour 'Iraq 2003' was ordered to be borne on the regimental standard.

The regiment spent the remainder of 2003 on post-operational leave, on adventure training and, with the prospect of a tour of duty in Northern Ireland looming, preparing for that role at Lydd in Kent. The Northern Ireland tour did not materialise and, as 2003 gave way to 2004, a different type of training became imminent: the regiment began to familiarise itself with Bowman – the tactical, digital voice and data communications system then being introduced throughout the British armed forces. Working with Bowman occupied much of 2004, while at the same time the regiment trained in the use of its tanks on Sennelager and at BATUS. In June 2004, B Squadron found the Royal Guard during the Queen's annual visit to Edinburgh and, at the end of the year, a further period of training for possible Northern Ireland deployment was undertaken. Again, the Northern Ireland tour was cancelled, and the regiment spent much of 2005, as in 2004, training with Bowman and with its tanks.

Regimental Provost Sergeant Mark Smith, Basra Technical College, April 2003. (© Aidan Stephen)

The Iraq War of 2003 had brought down the regime of Saddam Hussein but left an administrative vacuum in its place and Britain and its allies had been unable simply to withdraw from Iraq in 2003 as they had in 1991; Iraq's postwar instability was arguably more threatening to peace in the region than Saddam's dictatorship had been. This instability was exacerbated by a Shia Muslim insurgency inspired by the cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and perpetrated by paramilitary forces operating under the title Jaish al-Mahdi (or 'Mahdi army'); the insurgency was tacitly supported by neighbouring Iran and aimed at ejecting Western military forces from Iraq, as a result of which the embryonic and democratic Iraqi government would have fallen to those wishing to establish a fundamentalist Islamic state. In the years following 2003, regular brigade-strength deployments of British troops were sent to southern Iraq, in a series of roulements, in an attempt to help stabilise the country through securing its borders, training its armed forces and police and providing military support to its local and national governments. The ultimate aim was to be able to withdraw Western military forces from Iraq, leaving the country stable and able to administer and defend itself; the phrase 'transition, with security' became used as a popular way of describing that policy – which was far easier to describe and aspire to than it was to implement. In mid-2005, the regiment was warned that it would deploy to Iraq, as part of the 7th Armoured Brigade, for a six-month tour in October 2005; this operational deployment would carry the codename Telic 7.

As with its wartime deployment in the spring of 2003, the regiment was dispersed during Telic 7. The regimental battle group, where the largest concentration of regimental personnel was to be found, was based at Camp Abu Naji south of Al Amarah, capital of Maysan province in eastern Iraq: it consisted of Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters and B Squadrons and the essential logistics and technical support; the infantry component was supplied by two companies from the 1st Battalion, the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons) and one company from the 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment. C Squadron was attached to the 9th/12th Lancers in Umm Qasr on the Kuwaiti border in south-eastern Iraq and D Squadron was attached to the Danish battle group located at the Logistics Base at Shaibah. The remaining sabre squadron, A Squadron, was broken up for the duration of Operation Telic 7, its personnel being attached to the regiment's other squadrons and sub-units. B, C and D Squadrons each took personnel in varying numbers and in the form of 'multiples' from A Squadron and elsewhere in the regiment; twelve of the regiment's remaining personnel – under command of Staff Sergeant (later Regimental Sergeant-Major) Ian

Lamb – formed a small ‘multiple’ equipped with seven comparatively soft-skinned vehicles to provide local protection for Brigade Headquarters.

The story of the regimental battle group’s deployment to Iraq in 2005/06 has been related by the regiment’s Commanding Officer at the time, Lieutenant-Colonel B. P. (Ben) Edwards, in the regimental publication Letters from Amarah: The Iraq Tour October 2005–April 2006. As Colonel Edwards explained in 2006, the means by which the regiment achieved its objectives during its first postwar Iraq deployment was every bit as important as the achievement of the objectives themselves. Politics was as significant as military tactics in a country riven by discord, subject to malign external influences, uncertain as to which – if any – of its professed new friends it could trust and coming, haltingly and not a little unwillingly, to terms with the concept of a Western-style democracy so much recommended by liberal Western outsiders and yet so much at odds with the region’s traditions, cultures and history.

The regimental battle group took over nine Challenger 2s on arrival in Iraq but brought most of its own smaller and lighter vehicles out from Fallingbostel. The specific role of the battle group was defined within the overarching policy of ‘transition, with security’: thus, negotiations had to be conducted with tact and delicacy while at the same time operations necessitated the threat – and occasionally the use – of overwhelming force. There was a constant need to resist the temptation to respond to provocation and, underpinning everything, was the requirement to assign all tactical successes to the Iraqi security forces, however slight or reliable their contribution had been. Provocation was an almost constant occurrence and ranged from attacks by 122mm Katyusha rockets on Camp Abu Naji – 122 rockets received in 68 attacks – to the regular stoning of patrols. While the rocket-launchers were occasionally deterred by the deployment of sniping teams, the adolescent stoners had simply to be ignored and the bruises tolerated. In operating against arms smuggling and the movement of caches of arms, the battle group replicated, though in a more urban environment, some of the operations of C and D Squadrons elsewhere in the province.

The pursuit and arrest of terrorist suspects was a regular feature of the battle group’s activities but some operations of that nature stand out. In Operation Dorado, executed in Al Amarah with the assistance of the Iraqi Counter-

Terrorism Force overnight on 24/25 March 2006, the battle group utilised not only its tanks – operating at night together with infantry and in an urban environment in a manner at that time largely untried – but also helicopters that acted as the operation’s ‘eyes’ and snipers to deal with insurgents on rooftops.

Throughout the deployment, it remained essential to maintain Camp Abu Naji’s contact with the outside world in Iraq. The camp could not be allowed to project a ‘siege mentality’ to either friendly Iraqis or to the Mahdi army. Therefore, as well as constant patrolling, generally on foot or in Land Rovers, into Al Amarah and its vicinity, the battle group supplied security, within its area, for convoys moving to and from the coast as well as controlling the nearby airstrip, codenamed ‘Sparrowhawk’, so that regular flights – about three times every week and usually by Hercules C-130 transport aircraft – could be received and despatched safely: these flights carried supplies for the base as well as visitors and securing and holding the airstrip in the face of constant insurgent threats to it was a time-consuming and demanding business. Among the VIP visitors to the battle group were the Iraqi prime minister, Ibrahim Jaafari, and six of his ministers, on 27 December 2005, and HRH The Duke of Kent, the regiment’s Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, on 6 February 2006.

Despite the need for constant vigilance in a threatening and unwelcoming environment, no opportunities were lost for either appropriate commemoration or seasonal celebration. Balaklava Day, 25 October, was celebrated in some style. A visit was paid to the Al Amarah War Cemetery on 11 November – which served to remind those attending of nearly a century of British military involvement in what is now Iraq. Christmas happened to fall during a greatly appreciated respite from attacks on the camp and so was celebrated in true regimental fashion.

The battle group’s role in providing security during the Iraqi elections was one paralleled by the regiment’s other components, at a time when the danger from insurgents anxious to interrupt or interfere with the democratic process was greatly heightened, and the exercise of its security role was one that required great diplomacy. While election-policing and insurgent-containment were roles that belonged to the modern world in Iraq, the personnel of the battle group occasionally found themselves required to mediate, or attempt to mediate, in matters essentially unchanged for centuries – such as tribal disputes and blood feuds. It was also frequently the experience of those serving in the battle group that, despite all their best efforts to assist the Iraqis towards stability and security, there appeared to be little interest in the process from among influential Iraqis in Maysan province – except in personal gain in its differing forms: the expression ‘helping people to help themselves’ might have taken on quite a different meaning if cynicism had triumphed over idealism. Despite this impression, the battle group ended its tour in a mood of optimism for the future stability of Iraq; the deployment was an exacting and tiring one and most were relieved not only when it ended on that note but also that the regiment sustained fewer casualties than might have been expected.

C Squadron arrived in Iraq on 16 October 2005. Its seven Challenger 2s, having been taken over in theatre, were based at Shaibah camp and constituted the heavy armoured element of the 9th/12th Lancers’ Formation Reconnaissance Battle Group. The squadron also operated a variety of other, less well-armoured, vehicles that were better suited to its operations in an area of responsibility the size of Northern Ireland: that part of Iraq south of Basra and as far as the Iraq/Kuwait border. C Squadron’s various ‘multiples’ were assigned differing duties, each of which reflected the nature of post-Saddam Iraq and necessitated confronting the difficulties of, and solving the problems involved in, nation-building. These duties comprised, among a host of others: responsibility for security in Iraq’s two working ports, two of southern Iraq’s three ports of immigration and two Iraqi/Kuwaiti border-crossing points; training and mentoring the Iraqi army and police; carrying out constant border patrols; working on improvement projects with the civilian population and with Western and Iraqi agencies; establishing and manning vehicle checkpoints; providing and maintaining security for UN agencies and visiting VIPs; and liaising with the representatives of Iraqi local government. The multiplicity and variety of tasks would have been demanding enough in a country that was consistently welcoming and peaceful but this was far from the case in Iraq at that time. Regimental personnel were in constant danger from the Mahdi army, whose capacity to disrupt the rebuilding of Iraq had gradually become better organised and more sophisticated: one manifestation of this was the increasing use by the insurgents of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). While IEDs were of limited use against main battle tanks, they were particularly effective against the 'soft-skinned' or lightly armoured vehicles in which most of the squadron's 'multiples' carried out their duties. It was to an IED that C Squadron lost Corporal Gordon Pritchard on 31 January 2006 when his vehicle – leading a supply convoy from Umm Qasr to Kuwait – passed and exploded a roadside IED. Pritchard was killed instantly and three members of his crew, one of whom was a female senior clerk attached from the Adjutant-General's Corps, were wounded. Pritchard's father and one of his brothers had served with the regiment; he was widely liked and respected for his personal and leadership qualities and considered to have great potential as a non-commissioned officer.

HM The Queen after opening the new regimental museum in Edinburgh Castle on 6 July 2006. Left to right: Lieutenant-General Sir Norman Arthur KCB CVO, Major General Charles Ramsay CB OBE, Her Majesty, Brigadier Melville Jameson CBE, Colonel of the Regiment, and HRH The Duke of Kent, Deputy Colonel-in-Chief.

D Squadron arrived in Iraq on 24 October 2005 to assume duties in the area north of Basra as part of the Danish battle group. D Squadron’s area of operations was vast, covering an area from the northern suburbs of Basra to the border of Maysan province, eastward to the frontier with Iran and including the confluence of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Within the squadron were six ‘multiples’, five of which were regimental – with one drawn from the dismembered A Squadron – and during the six-month tour these units were detailed to tasks as varied and as demanding as those undertaken by C Squadron. The squadron operated without tanks but principally in Snatch Land Rovers with two Warrior lightly armoured troop carriers attached; each type provided differing degrees of protection against small-arms fire, RPGs and IEDs. Patrols were undertaken, Iraqi forces mentored, advised and trained and borders watched; searches – for both insurgent suspects and weapons – became a regular feature and the ‘multiples’ often alternated between guard duty and providing the skilled transport necessary to assist the Danes in their Quick Reaction Force role. For some of its deployment, particularly when on lengthy patrols in the desert, the squadron spent periods of up to ten days living rough. The Iraqi elections in December 2005 necessitated operations against predicted insurgent behaviour aimed at disrupting and subverting the democratic process, so the security state and squadron activity were all heightened at that time. For a short period, two of the squadron’s troops were seconded as reinforcements to the 9th/12th Lancers’ Formation Reconnaissance Battle Group. As the squadron’s tour neared its end, on 15 April 2006, it sustained the regiment’s second fatality – that of Lieutenant Richard Palmer, a popular troop leader who had been with the squadron, and regiment, only since August 2004. Palmer died of his wounds after his vehicle, part of a patrol being conducted by his 4th Troop in concert with a detachment from the Iraqi army, was blown up by an IED. His father had served with the regiment as commander of the Light Aid Detachment in the 1970s.

The regimental deployment to Iraq ended in April 2006, with the regiment’s elements of the battle group returning to Fallingbostel at the end of that month and being joined by C and D Squadrons early in May, after which A Squadron was reconstituted. Following post-operational leave, a period of recruiting was undertaken in Scotland, with the regimental recruiting team –

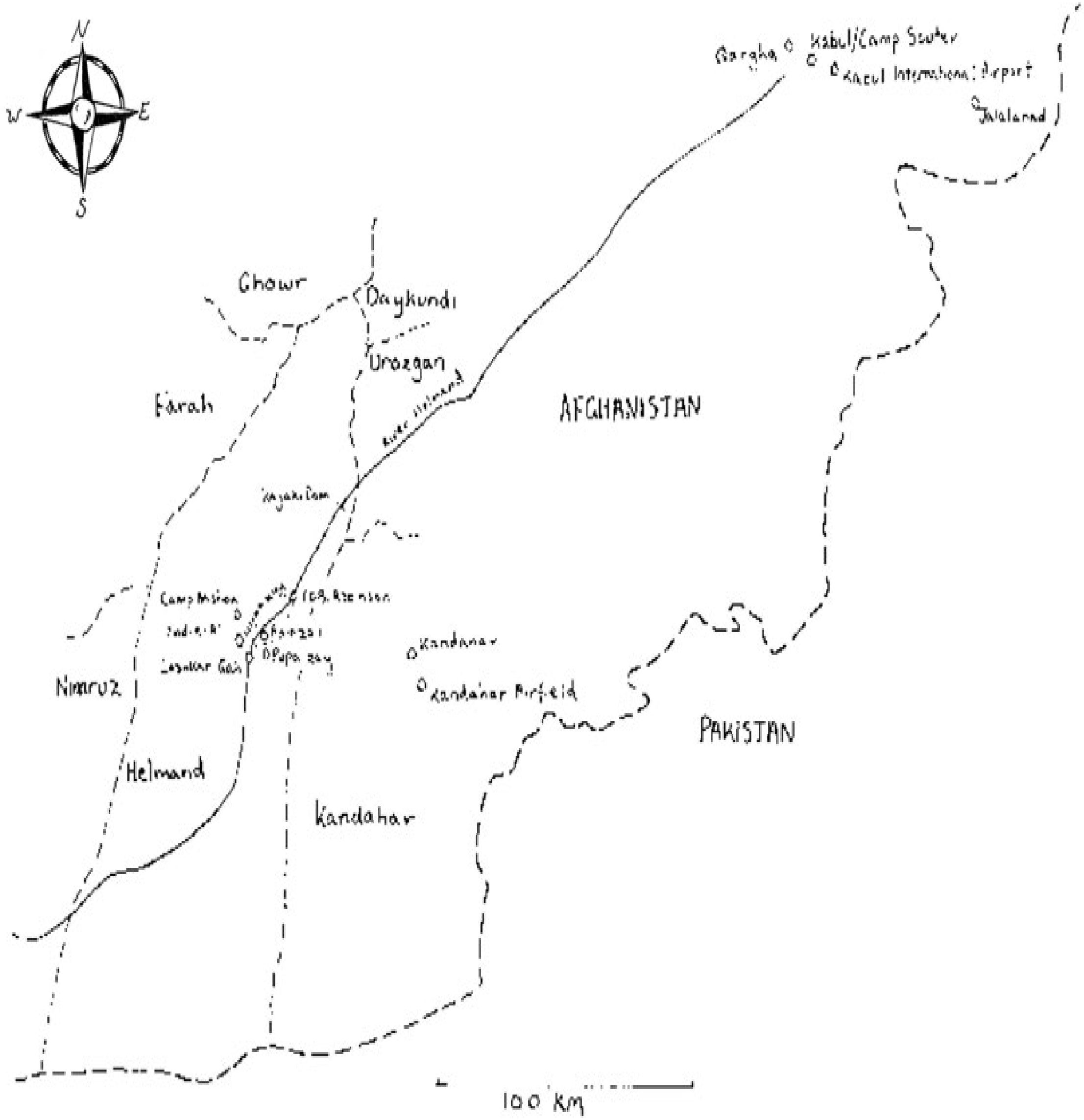
headed by D Squadron and including three Challenger 2s – travelling across the country's central belt from Strathclyde to Kirkcaldy and attracting great interest. The presence of the recruiting team in Scotland meant that a significant number of personnel from the regiment were available to attend the reopening of the regimental museum by HM The Queen on 6 July; the museum had been moved from its previous and unsatisfactory location to a more prominent position in the New Barracks. Later in the year, on 12 November, the centenary of the unveiling of the Royal Scots Greys' war memorial in Princes Street, Edinburgh, was marked at a ceremony held to commemorate the armistice at the end of the First World War.

After the regiment's varied activities at home and in Iraq during 2006, 2007 was spent relatively conventionally: training and exercises in Germany and Poland and at BATUS in Canada occupied much of the working year, with the regimental battle group being graded as the year's best battle group at BATUS. Another notable achievement was the recording in August by the Pipes and Drums of a compact disc album entitled Spirit of the Glen. Recorded and produced thirty-five years after the remarkable success of 'Amazing Grace' in 1972, the new album rapidly achieved similar success, being awarded two gold discs in reflection of its high sales and maintaining a place at the top of the classical music charts for fourteen weeks. Having overseen much of the new album, Pipe Major Derek Potter left the regiment in June 2008 to be promoted to WO1 and appointed Sovereign's Piper, taking up the post in August – the first cavalry soldier to hold that position.

The versatility and flexibility of the regiment was thoroughly tested in 2008. During 2007 notice had been given that in the following year a squadron would be required to deploy to Afghanistan while other detachments – at that point unspecified – would be required to return to Iraq to serve separately during the operation that would become Telic 12. By early 2008, the nature of the regimental deployments had become clearer. B Squadron was to go to Afghanistan as part of the 16th Air Assault Brigade on Operation Herrick 8 and A and C Squadrons would go to Iraq on Telic 12; D Squadron and Regimental Headquarters would remain in Fallingbostel. However, by the time that most of the regiment moved to Iraq in May the tactical requirement for Telic 12 had changed and Regimental Headquarters had been ordered to move to Iraq to take command of a regimental battle group.

As with the 2005/06 regimental deployment on Operation Telic 7, each of the regiment’s detachments in Iraq in 2008 had a different role and most sub-units served in a variety of roles during the deployment. However, because of the pressing need to reduce the British Army’s commitment in Iraq in order to increase its contribution to the continuing and escalating war in Afghanistan at a time when cuts in the defence budget were continuing to reduce the size of the army, the speedy removal of British troops from Iraq had become a high priority in British government defence policy. This meant that by 2008 the need to monitor, mentor and train the Iraqi security services – in order that they could assume responsibility for their country’s security – had become essential during British military deployments to Iraq. During Telic 12, the regimental battle group worked as part of the United Kingdom Military Transition Team (MiTT) Group supporting the 14th Iraqi Infantry Division in and around Basra. The different components of the regimental battle group operated in a variety of vehicles – Bulldogs, Mastiffs, Vikings, Vectors and Warriors – and each was used for the role most appropriate to its strengths. Notable about the more modern of those vehicles was the extent to which their armour and armament had either been designed or been specifically adapted and improved in order to decrease their vulnerability to rocket-propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices while increasing their capacity to respond to attacks using heavy automatic fire available in a variety of combinations. These modern vehicles enabled the regiment to serve effectively in Iraq in what was increasingly becoming called a mounted close combat role; this was, by 2008, a role viewed by many as the most likely and most effective future use of British cavalry regiments.

Regimental operations in Afghanistan 2008–14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Farah
AFGHANISTAN
Kajaki Dam
Camp Bastion
FOB Robinson
Nad-e-Ali
Lashkar Gah
Papa Zay
Kandahar
Kandahar Airfield
Nimruz
Helmand
Kandahar
PAKISTAN
100 KM

‘At the going down of the sun’: a command vehicle on the Canadian prairie, BATUS (British Army Training Unit, Suffield), 2007.

C Squadron initially retained its Challenger 2s to form the armoured component within the battle group headed by the 1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers but, additionally and for a short period, also worked – dismounted – as prison guards at the Divisional Internment Facility. Although the tanks were retained in case of need, that need noticeably diminished and the squadron served through most of the tour dismounted, being deployed as border guards, providing the security to surround a crashed American Chinook helicopter and retraining as part of boat patrol units, among many other varied tasks.

A unit called ‘Waterloo Company’ was formed from A Squadron: this comprised three dismounted platoons that also incorporated men of D Company of the 4th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland; the platoons were given the names ‘Marne’, ‘Somme’ and ‘Alamein’ and operated within the regimental battle group. With Company Headquarters at the Basra Operations Centre (BaOC), formerly the Shatt al-Arab Hotel, the three platoons worked in and from Bulldogs – upgraded troop-carriers with increased armour protection – in regular patrols in and around Basra in support of units of the Iraqi army in the MiTT role and as part of Telic 12’s Quick Reaction Force (QRF). An additional role, but using Mastiffs (heavily armoured and armed patrol vehicles with an eight-man troop-carrying capacity), was to act as the protection for the regiment’s, and battle group’s, Commanding Officer as he and his staff travelled through the area of operations.

The mounted close-combat role had become increasingly developed in Afghanistan, where B Squadron deployed in April and May and learned valuable lessons while helping to write that latest chapter in the history of the British cavalry. The regiment’s first experience of service in Afghanistan had come with the 6th Dragoon Guards, which first served there in 1879 and 1880 during Britain’s Second Afghan War. In the 130 years since then, British troops had been involved periodically in Afghanistan, which bordered the North-West Frontier of British India, but that involvement had ceased upon the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. It might be fair to say, though, that little had changed in Afghanistan in 130 years: the country remained in every respect tribal – hostile to change, distrustful and resentful of foreigners, and other tribes, and generally uninterested in any notion of modern Western forms of government. The American-led ‘defeat’ of the Taleban in 2001, referred to above, had not endured and Afghanistan’s porous border with Pakistan had led to the governments of both countries becoming threatened by militant and militaristic Islamist fundamentalism as represented by the Taleban and al-Qaeda: the former wished again to dominate the government of Afghanistan and the latter wished to use both Afghanistan and the more remote parts of Pakistan as training and concealment areas for networks of Muslim terrorists engaged in their jihad (holy war) against a number of the world’s non-Islamic nations. While the war in Afghanistan was unwinnable in any conventional sense – just as all previous wars in Afghanistan had similarly been ‘unwinnable’ – not to have engaged with the Taleban would have greatly increased the West’s vulnerability to attack by al-Qaeda.

B Squadron was divided into two half-squadron troops for deployment to Afghanistan. One troop was equipped with CVR (T) Scimitar medium-armoured vehicles of the type that had been used by the regiment's Reconnaissance Troop since the 1980s; it was attached to the battle group led by 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment. The other troop served in Viking lightly armoured, tracked and articulated troop carriers, which, in earlier marques and with less protection, had previously been used in Arctic training; it was attached to a squadron of the Queen's Royal Lancers. The Scimitar troop consisted of thirty-six personnel and was part of a manoeuvre company based at a Forward Operating Base (FOB) codenamed 'Robinson' in the Upper Gereshk valley, south of Sangin. The Viking troop was based at Kandahar airfield, in Helmand province, as part of the manoeuvre component of the Regional Command (South) Reserve Battle Group led by 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment. Once fully installed at FOB Robinson, the Scimitar troop provided convoy escorts, cover for the evacuation of casualties and route protection: IEDs were encountered and Taleban attacks experienced during a tour that often involved deployments outside the FOB of up to six days in soaring temperatures. Convoy duty also loomed large in the deployment undertaken by the Viking troop as it provided transport through Helmand, most notably in the escort of a turbine destined for the Kajaki Dam and known to be a Taleban target. Both troops returned unscathed to Fallingbostel, via Cyprus, at the end of the year.

All elements of the regiment having returned safely to Germany by the beginning of 2009 and having recovered from two demanding operational deployments, the early part of the year was spent in tank training – to remind experienced soldiers of the capacities of Challenger 2 and Scimitar and to introduce recruits to what were still, despite the notion of 'mounted close combat' and the lighter vehicles used in Iraq and Afghanistan, the regiment's principal weapons. Early in the year, as a reflection both of the versatile mounted close combat role increasingly required of armoured regiments and of that squadron's recent experience in that role in Afghanistan, B Squadron absorbed the Reconnaissance Troop and adopted the medium armour role with Scimitars – for so long the vehicle of the Recce Troop and used with such success by half of B Squadron in Afghanistan in 2008. For the same reasons, C Squadron was warned that it would be required to change its vehicles from Challenger 2s to the lightly armoured articulated tracked vehicle called BV 206, or 'Snowcat' – the predecessor of the Vikings operated by half of B Squadron in Afghanistan. While these operational changes were happening, the regiment's public profile was raised in 2009, especially in Scotland. The Pipes and Drums, having recorded a few tracks while deployed in Iraq in 2008, released a new compact disc album entitled Spirit of the Glen: Journey in December 2008. The new album achieved great success in the charts and was then awarded a Classical Brit Award as 'Album of the Year' on 14 May 2009. It was followed later in 2009 by the issue of a compilation album, The Ultimate Collection, and so by the end of the year the regiment's Pipes and Drums had achieved the remarkable distinction of having three albums present in the classical music charts simultaneously. Earlier in May, it had been the regiment's turn to sponsor Cavalry Memorial Day, when the salute was taken by the Deputy Colonel-in-Chief. During the months of June and July 2009, about half the regiment deployed to Scotland on Exercise Soldier's Return, an operation that included finding the Royal Guard at the Palace of Holyroodhouse during Edinburgh's 'Royal Week', guard duty at Edinburgh Castle, celebrating the Waterloo Weekend in the presence of the Colonel-in-Chief at Redford Barracks and marching through the cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth – the first two parades being accompanied by a Challenger 2 and a Scimitar. Later in the year, the regiment took part in its first field firing exercise for about two years and the remainder of the year was spent in training, both mounted and dismounted, in preparation for another visit to BATUS in 2010 and also for the ever-present possibilities of another Afghanistan deployment – possibilities that were heightened by the changes to the role and equipment undertaken by B and C Squadrons.

On 8 March 2010 the Colonel, Brigadier Simon Allen, attended a dinner at Pewterers' Hall, London, at which the Company's affiliation to the regiment was formally announced. The Company has since presented a magnificent chandelier in pewter and generously sponsors prizes for various regimental competitions. In the spring the possibility of another deployment to Afghanistan became a reality and the regiment was warned that it would move there as part of Operation Herrick 14 in April 2011. Throughout the year, therefore, training was focused upon the return to Afghanistan, in far greater regimental strength than in 2008. Although early-year training took place on Sennelager, part of this was carried out on simulators and not until the regiment moved to BATUS was it possible to train as a battle group with less restricted firing conditions than were possible in Germany. The regiment’s activities in Canada involved battle group training and participation in exercises at BATUS between March and July 2010, during which A and D Squadrons fired their Challenger 2s, B Squadron fired its Scimitars and C Squadron completed its conversion to its new protected mobility role in Snowcats. By 2010, the training facilities at BATUS reflected the latest type of warfare in which the British Army was involved: counter-insurgency warfare of the type being waged in Afghanistan. To that end, part of the landscape at Suffield was modified – as far as was possible – not only to replicate ground conditions to be expected and encountered in Afghanistan but also to incorporate a mock Afghan village (complete with genuine Afghans hired on contract to provide authenticity as well as cultural and linguistic acclimatisation), some typical forward observation bases and other urban and rural, military and civilian, manifestations of what could be expected upon deployment to Afghanistan. While training at BATUS in 2010, therefore, the regiment did far more than field firing: it practised convoy escort duty, arrest and detention of suspects, clearance of compounds and operations with local police amongst a host of other exercises intended to train officers and men for the realities of war in Afghanistan; part of the regiment also participated in exercises in which it represented the enemy. The need for the regiment’s personnel to be as flexible and adaptable as ever was justified in mid-2010 when the tasks to be achieved by the regiment as part of Operation Herrick 14 were announced – tasks very different from those that might once have been required of a Type 58 armoured regiment.

BATUS; B Squadron as role-players, spring 2010.

C Squadron BV 206s at BATUS, April 2010.

As with previous counter-insurgency deployments, the regiment was to be separated on Operation Herrick 14, forming part of 3 Commando Brigade. Eighteen personnel of A Squadron were attached to 45 Commando Battle Group to work with the 3rd Battalion, the Mercian Regiment and be condensed into a battalion-sized Training and Advisory Team for the Afghan army, to which would be attached five Afghan companies, or tolays. Although of greatly reduced size, the squadron's role was vital within the policy of 'transition, with security' referred to above. B Squadron was detailed principally to provide the crews for the Mastiff and Ridgeback armoured wheeled troop carriers used by infantry from the 4th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland and by C Squadron in its temporarily dismounted deployment role alongside that battalion. The squadron was also required – as needed – to provide, train and contain personnel either as individual replacements for the other squadrons or for brigade battle casualties. C Squadron was ordered to convert to the infantry role and to serve dismounted with the 4th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland. D Squadron was given responsibility for the Warthog armoured and articulated tracked vehicles used as troop carriers by the Brigade Headquarters for Helmand province. HQ Squadron largely remained in Germany to form the core of the training school within 1st Armoured Division for crews of the variety of vehicles used in Afghanistan but also provided some key personnel at Camp Bastion in Helmand. Regimental Headquarters was to assume responsibility as the reserve battle group within 3 Commando Brigade and provide staff officers for Headquarters in Helmand.

It was with this wide variety of tasks in mind that the regiment began pre-deployment training in September 2010. This training took place at Sennelager, on the Stanford training area near Thetford in Norfolk, at Otterburn in Northumberland and at Castlemartin in Wales; it occupied the remainder of the year and covered – both in theory and in practice – every aspect of preparation for deployment to what was, for most involved, a completely new theatre of operations with its own peculiarities. By the end of 2010, and three months away from its deployment to Afghanistan, the regiment needed only to exercise with its parent units and formations in order to be completely prepared for Herrick 14: that exercise was planned to take place on Salisbury Plain early in 2011.

Operation Panzer , carried out by C Squadron on 26/27 March 2003, was undoubtedly the most challenging operation undertaken by a unit of British armour since the Second World War. After four days held in reserve at Shaibah airfield, Squadron Leader Major Johnny Biggart could scarcely believe the scale of the assignment when the order to move out, at very short notice, came through from Brigade Headquarters. Fourteen Challengers with four support vehicles were to advance through fifty miles of enemy-held territory to reinforce the Royal Marines of 40 Commando and the Brigade Recce Force and elements of the QDG. The lightly armed Marines were cut off from Coalition forces and coming under increasing pressure from armour

operating out of Abu Al Khasib. The haste and brevity of the orders reflected the urgency of the situation.

For much of the route across the barren, battle-scarred salt flats, the 75-ton Challengers would have to advance at a slow trot in single file over the narrow, raised earth levees – barely suitable for donkey and cart – that criss-cross a peninsula shrouded in fog and mist at night and early morning … and they were to do so without maps and without the intimate support of the Irish Guards. Call it a raid, an advance to contact, an attack, a provision of reinforcements or a rescue mission, for the sixty men of C Squadron, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, Operation Panzer was going to be the greatest challenge of their lives.

The squadron set out under darkness, skirting the 'hornets' nest' of Az Zubayr, the scene that week of lethal ambushes, audacious raids by the Black Watch Battle Group and the deaths of six British Army personnel in four separate incidents including a blue-on-blue incident involving two other British tank regiments. After a final replen, the crews bade farewell to the squadron quartermaster sergeant and set out on a march that was going to stretch their supply chain to breaking point. It was considered unwise for squadron administration packets and infantry to follow the heavy armour in their thin-skinned vehicles through an area known to be heavily defended by tanks, mortar units, hundreds of dismounts dug into well-established bunker positions and any number of freelance irregulars. Food, at the other end, was to be supplied by the Marines. As for fuel and spare parts … they would have to work that out later. There was no time to waste.

Their first obstacle task, arguably the most daunting of the entire venture, was to cross a 200-metre stretch of the Khawr Abd Allah, a fast-flowing tidal estuary at the southern end of the Shatt al-Basrah shipping canal where the mighty Euphrates and Tigris once emptied into the Persian Gulf. They were to do so on a motorised aluminium pontoon operated by the territorials of 3 Troop, 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron, Royal Engineers. It was one minute to midnight Zulu time – three o'clock in the morning to the locals – when C Squadron reached the landing craft site. Transporting main battle tanks across an estuary on M3 rigs was an operational first for engineers and

cavalrymen alike. The squadron leader led from the front. The other thirteen commanders, lined up behind, waited with trepidation as Zero Bravo plunged, unsighted, over the lip of an almost sheer bank, slid down the mud slope and wriggled over the flats onto a rig only a foot wider than the tank itself before being ferried at 5 mph through the mist to the most westerly edge of the Al Faw. Feeling the tug of the powerful tide below them was an ordeal for the closed-down crew and it was with great relief that they felt the rig slap onto the mud on the far shore. One by one, over four uncertain hours, the other call signs followed in numerical order. The first grey streaks of morning were appearing when the last call sign, Four Two, appeared through the fog and thundered back onto terra firma.

They were now in true enemy territory, 30 miles to the southwest of the Marines. Trapped by the waterway behind them, were they to be attacked here, they would have to fight their way out to the north along tight causeways with no room for manoeuvre. In between the only two Coalition units on the peninsula, there lay as lifeless and inhospitable an expanse of land as any on the planet.

While the others crossed, Major Biggart rendezvoused with the Liaison Officer of the QDG Recce Troop to receive his orders from 3rd Commando Brigade. The orders, hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper the size of a playing card, were not the most detailed the squadron leader had ever seen, but they did at least have the virtue of simplicity. The map he took from the LO provided greater encouragement.

They were going to try to reach the Marines with a 20-mile gallop against an unknown quantity of armour – possibly as many as fifty tanks according to the Intel. The squadron split in two at the Line of Departure, codenamed ‘Waterloo’, with 2nd and 3rd Troops together with Major Biggart’s Zero Bravo leading the main attack. They were to advance eastwards along a raised pipeline to a major road junction, dubbed ‘Taku’, and then along the wide metalled carriageway for eight miles to the next interchange, ‘Coriano’, through the layered defences of the enemy along the southern edge of Basra’s suburbs. At the same time, 1st and 4th troops, led by Captain Cattermole, were to take an almost parallel route along a complex off-road route two miles or so to the south. Their task was to provide fire support for Zero Bravo's group and prevent enemy leakage at the other end.

H-hour was set at 0500 Zulu time. As the fourteen Challengers took up position, three miles to the north, obscured by the fog, the streets of densely populated Basra were starting to fill. Market stalls and shops opened for business; cars and carts jockeyed for space on the bridges and in the crowded streets.

Captain Fraser McLeman, 3rd Troop leader, took up position at the head of the column as the tank 'on point'. 'Three, two, one . . . Move!' snapped Major Biggart. The critical phase of the most important and daring British tank operation in almost seventy years was under way as the Challengers began their slow advance over the crumbling narrow levee.

Visibility had improved a little since daybreak but it was still down to 200 yards, and the commanders were using their thermal-imaging capability more than the day sights as they scanned the terrain. Halfway to Taku, a splash of green erupted in the centre of their screens, accompanied by a monstrous rumble that ran along the earth embankment. A rapid succession of further explosions and bright flashes followed as the AS-90 guns of the Royal Horse Artillery laid down a heavy barrage on the enemy positions up ahead. One of the 155mm rounds landed on top of the underground junction of Iraq's main oil pipelines just to the south of the Taku road interchange, creating a raging ball of orange flames and thick black smoke.

Two hundred yards short of the junction, McLeman flicked the sights to high magnification and through a gap in the smoke and mist he saw the outline of a T-55, its barrel slightly elevated and pointing towards them. The thermal imaging revealed a heat source. The Soviet-made T-55 was vastly inferior to the Challenger, but he knew a round in the right spot could still disable him – and if this adversary did take him out now and he was unable to advance any further, then Operation Panzer was effectively stillborn. The call signs behind him could not pass.

'Zero, Three Zero, contact, tanks, wait out!' They had all heard the words many times out on the plains of Canada, Poland and Germany but now it was for real. McLeman's calmly delivered words – Contact, tanks! – ran through C Squadron's fourteen turrets like a bolt of electricity.

Three Zero was pulling off the dirt track and onto the dual carriageway at Taku when the gunner squeezed the firing button, the muzzle flashed, and the Fin round streaked through the haze at 1,000 metres per second. A powerful rush of air and cordite from the bag charge swept through the turret as the main gun recoiled deep into the tank and the Challenger rocked ever so gently on its tracks, belying the violence it had just unleashed. In less time than it takes to blink, a small flash appeared at the base of the T-55's turret and, almost at once, a white spray of molten metal burst out the other side. The turret of the T-55 began to wobble as the ammunition inside began to 'brew up'. Flames and smoke belched from the sides of the tank for a few seconds before the hatches flew open and a ball of orange lifted the turret away from the hull and dumped it back down with the barrel hanging forlornly at the side.

Thus began C Squadron's charge across the Al Faw.

As the call signs behind sped onto the hard surface of the road junction, Three One reported dozens of mines scattered across the road ahead of them and immediately set about blasting them from their path with the coaxial machine gun. The line of date palms to the north twinkled with dozens of muzzle flashes and trails of tracer streaked through the last wisps of the morning mist as the enemy opened up. Biggart ordered 3rd Troop to go firm and sent through Captain Rick Le Sueur's 2nd Troop, followed by Zero Bravo, to take up the lead.

One by one, the seven Challengers emerged from the thick smoke enveloping the junction as if from behind a black curtain billowing in the wind. Most of the incoming enemy fire was emanating from positions to the north of the column. Their sights revealed a landscape bristling with enemy activity. There were tanks all along the route, most of them hull down with just the tops of their turrets and barrels visible.

It was simply a question of how many there were and whether any of them were the more formidable T-72s. MT-LB armoured personnel carriers disgorged troops in a chain of pre-prepared bunker positions. The daring angle of C Squadron's attack through the marshland may have been a tactical surprise, but the enemy were there in considerable numbers and laying a heavy blanket of small-arms fire.

The squadron was making full use of the Challenger's technological superiority as they opened up with a potent mixture of Fin, HESH and coax. Loaders rammed rounds up the barrel, while commanders and gunners went into hunter-killer procedure, scanning, lasing and firing at a seemingly endless stream of targets. The turrets reverberated with shouts and orders and the traffic over the squadron net became congested as tank after tank reported its engagements and contact reports. The smell of cordite filled the fighting compartments. There were so many rounds being fired, it was difficult to know which call sign was engaging which target.

The line of trees to the north leapt with explosions and eruptions of earth. Tracer fire streaked back and forth. Mortar rounds fell amongst the advancing column of tanks, fountains of earth burst out of the ground on either side of the carriageway. The deafening roar of guns and hectic crackle of machine-gun fire filled the air, drowning out the yells and shouts of the dismounts on the ground as the opposing forces blasted away at each other over the rolling mudflats. A HESH round wiped the smile off Saddam Hussein's face in a giant stone mural at the side of the road, smashing out his teeth and the end of his nose in a shower of flying bricks. Fires raged out of the turrets of T-55s and hulls of armoured personnel carriers. Smoke drifted across the battlefield.

The crews of the T-55s were proving no match for their counterparts in the Challengers – either that, or they had seen the flaming waves of destruction rolling down their line and, jumping from their hatches, fled into the date palms to hole up with the infantry. Shadowy figures of black-clad Fedayeen soldiers ran in amongst the palms and between the bunkers, trying to rally the regular forces. Thousands of 7.62mm rounds kicked up the dirt in and around their positions, shredding the bark from the trunks and perforating the troop trucks and other vehicles parked up behind.

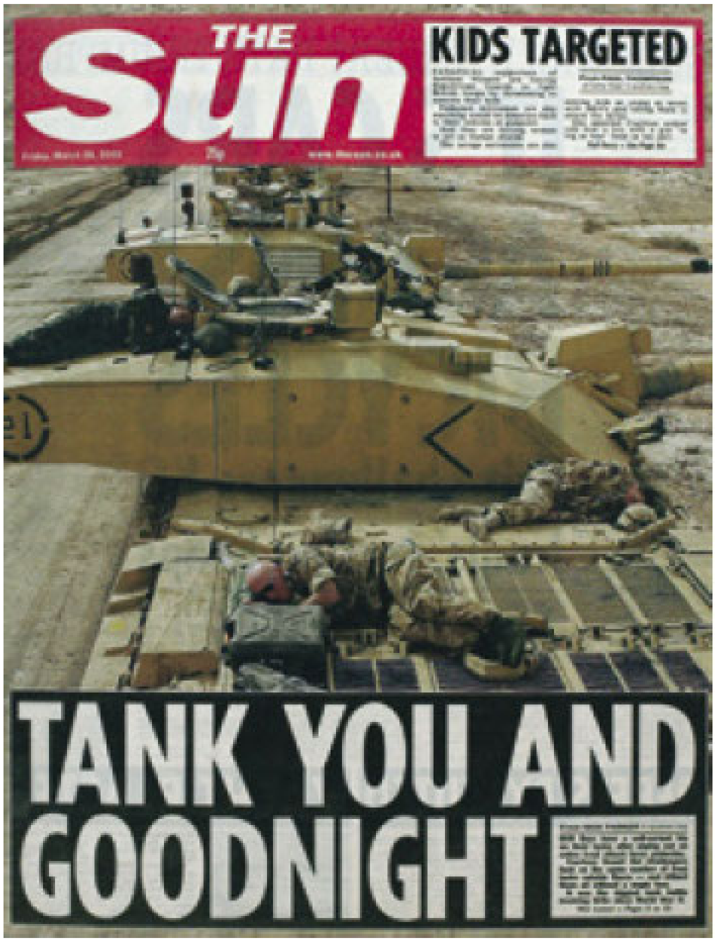
The immense firepower of the British tanks was having a shattering impact on the Iraqi lines. This was mobile warfare at its most effective. The enemy, in its chain of static positions, could barely lay a round on them as the tanks streaked along the highway. Whatever weight of fire the enemy hurled at them, the Challengers responded with even more devastating volleys of main rounds and coax – and then sped away down the road. This high-speed advance was as close to an old-fashioned cavalry charge as a modern armoured unit could hope to experience; it wasn't a tank battle in the purist sense but it was as near to it as they were going to get in the complex terrain of Iraq. The Challengers rolled irresistibly towards Coriano, leaving a landscape of smoke-choked desolation in their wake. To the advance unit of the Marines' BRF, exhausted after a week of fighting and living rough, it was a spine-tingling spectacle as they looked on from their positions to the east of the road junction. The advancing column had all the appearance of a ferocious naval broadside as the Challengers crashed their way through the enemy lines with all guns blazing off their sides, the tracer fire streaking back and forth. The burning, twisted wrecks of tanks and MT-LBs littered the landscape, palls of smoke rose through the air and the rumble of explosions grew louder by the minute as the column hammered towards them.

In amongst the scene of destruction lay the blazing remains of seven T-55s, six MT-LBs, and two large bunker positions, as well as an indeterminate number of dismount casualties, although such was the speed of the advance and the rate and weight of the fire that it was impossible to know the true number of targets destroyed. There was only one certainty: the biggest casualty suffered by the enemy was the blow to its morale. Without air or infantry support, half a squadron of British Challengers had just advanced along an 8-mile front, from one end of Iraqi-held territory to the other, cutting their defensive positions to ribbons in a matter of minutes.

When the Challengers pulled alongside the BRF's vehicles, having linked up with Cattermole's half of the squadron, it was difficult to say

which of the two formations was more delighted to see the other. The commanders and loaders emerged from their hatches as they approached the Marines, who were spread out along the side of the road in a convoy of cut-down Land Rovers, Pinzgauer troop carriers and quad bikes. Some were laid up in ditches and banks with their assault rifles and machine guns pointing towards Basra. One or two of the Marines were holding up video cameras as the dusty armoured column rolled through their position but the rest were clapping, cheering and banging their chests. Many of them had never seen a working Challenger up close, and the arrival of 1,000 tons of British armour, carrying the equivalent firepower of half a dozen regular infantry regiments, was an uplifting spectacle. The SCOTS DG were being given the military equivalent of a standing ovation from one of the most celebrated fighting forces on the planet and there was not a man inside those fourteen turrets who didn't feel a swelling of pride as they drove through their lines.

Abridged version of chapter in Main Battle Tank by Niall Edworthy



THE Sun

KIDS TARGETED

TANK YOU AND GOODNIGHT

Taken from The Scottish Sun, 28 March 2003. 2nd Troop, C Squadron, right to left: Sergeant Charlie Baird, Trooper William Fraser, Trooper Stuart Ferguson. (The Sun / News Syndication)

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

CHAPTER TEN

AFTERWORD, 2011–2014

D Squadron launching a Desert Hawk III unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicle, Afghanistan, July 2011.

As the regiment entered the second decade of the 21st century, there was increasing financial pressure across the army. Money was becoming tighter, operations in Afghanistan were still soaking up the major proportion of army activity and uncertainty and change continued to dominate the period. By 2014 the regiment would be training to become a light cavalry unit, thereby embracing a task which, whilst feeling new in the 21st century, harked back to similar roles that each of the regiment's predecessors had fulfilled in one form or another in the past. When mounted in Saladin and Saracen wheeled armoured cars in

Northern Ireland in the 1970s, the regiment had been operating in one of the roles that would reappear, forty-five years later, for light cavalry. The regiment retained a strong active role throughout the years 2011–2014; however, since its tanks were never deployed, the period could be characterised as a time when it operated consistently outside its core expertise.

By 2009 across Afghanistan a new method for countering the insurgency involved fighting by NATO forces to clear a section of ground before moving in the growing Afghan National Security Forces to hold the gains made. A comprehensive programme of building Afghan-led governance and economic development therefore followed. The culmination of such operations took place in central Helmand in 2010 with the much-vaunted Operation Moshtarak. For the summer of 2011, 3 Commando Brigade had been given the task of concentrating on bolstering Afghan forces in what was increasingly becoming their fight to hold onto territory gained.

During the winter of 2010/11, as the regiment concluded preparations for the final pre-deployment exercise, its Brigade Headquarters had made adjustments to the tasks and manning required. Changes of this nature had become a feature of each deployment to Afghanistan. Examples of some of the reasons for changes included a need to keep tactics one step ahead of the insurgents, or the introduction of new equipment, or an alteration in mission aims and policy. A Squadron had adjusted its manning to increase its holdings of officers and senior non-commissioned officers. The squadron group that joined 3rd Battalion, the Mercian Regiment for the final exercise had now been condensed into a training and advisory team. This had taken in some of the regiment’s more qualified and longer serving men so that they could give advice from a position of relative age and experience – viewed by Afghan society as being of great value. B Squadron still deployed crews for Mastiff and Ridgeback, while the remainder formed the Rear Operations Group in Fallingbostel. C Squadron joined 4th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland as an infantry company and D Squadron continued training on the Warthog in order to deliver mobility and fire support to the brigade. Regimental Headquarters had at last been allocated a mixture of roles: the Commanding Officer became a staff officer in the Task Force Headquarters in Lashkar Gah and the Second-in-Command also joined the staff in charge of Afghan National Security Force matters. In Camp Bastion the Regimental Sergeant-Major became the Garrison Sergeant-Major and the Quartermaster was elevated to look after the brigade troops. This construct at least allowed the Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant-Major to keep in close touch with the men.

Some of the roles given to squadrons mirrored in many ways the development of the tasks allotted to 6th Dragoon Guards between 1879 and 1880. There were surprising similarities between the tactics and techniques used by Taleban-inspired insurgents and those used by Yakub Khan's tribal forces to attack and harry British forces in Afghanistan during the Second Afghan War 130 years earlier. The technology involved in fighting was very different but in 2011 the principle of giving soldiers the best equipment that could be provided still endured. The war had increasingly been characterised by the widespread use of homemade bombs and frequent attacks on remote patrol bases. These bombs were different in both construction and sophistication from those experienced in Iraq but were nonetheless just as effective; a great deal of effort had gone into designing equipment first to defeat the device and then to mitigate its effects. The regiment benefited from a wide range of new equipment, much of which was not issued until the final training exercise. This last phase of training was extremely demanding, all the more so when conditions on Salisbury Plain and in Germany regularly dipped below -10°C. It was a temperature that sat in stark contrast to the figures C and D Squadrons later recorded in their diaries: both reported fighting on specific operations in temperatures topping 56°C in the summer of southern Afghanistan.

Daybreak on Salisbury Plain, D Squadron Vikings, January 2011.

D Squadron training for Helmand in Norfolk, autumn 2010.

From the earliest moment when the regiment received orders to deploy, the wider regimental family had sensed that this tour might be harsh. Indeed, the situation in Helmand offered all the components of what could be the toughest and perhaps bloodiest operation for the regiment in recent years. Remembering not only the deaths suffered but also the horrific injuries received by some of the men in Iraq, the Colonel of the Regiment launched a campaign under the banner ‘Caring for Courage’ to raise funds to close gaps in the support provided by the nation to soldiers and their families. It was envisaged that this fund would typically be able to disburse essential financial support to families much faster than more centralised organisations could do. The ‘Caring for Courage’ appeal was to prove its worth.

A Squadron engaging with locals in Helmand, summer 2011.

The regiment arrived in Helmand province during April 2011, just as the poppy harvest was beginning. Its completion within weeks would free the Taleban to pour manpower back into the insurgency for what was to prove a busy fighting season. A Squadron worked in areas that had experienced transition from Taleban control to control by the Afghan National Army. Throughout the succeeding six months, the squadron was widely dispersed, living and fighting embedded in its five allocated Afghan tolays both sides of the Helmand River centred on Nad-e-Ali. The squadron leader and his team lived with the Afghan kandak (battalion) commander. The squadron was responsible for giving advice and mentoring at every stage. This ranged from the routine inside patrol bases to the execution of a wide array of operations.

C Squadron operated in the vicinity of the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah. It was the first 21st-century Royal Armoured Corps squadron to train and fight in the infantry ground-holding role in Afghanistan but it followed clearly in the footsteps of dismounted dragoons. The squadron had some hard fighting to do; its first big operation took place on 30 April. The intensity of combat and the courage with which it was conducted was borne out by the award of the Military Cross to Corporal Keith Mitchell. He was the first soldier in the regiment to win the award since the rules were changed in 1992 to open it to all ranks. His citation reflects the nature of actions that soldiers all across Helmand were experiencing as, on 16 May, his patrol was pinned down in the village of Pupalzay. Rocket-propelled grenades had injured four of the section and Corporal Mitchell selflessly drew enemy fire and then suppressed the insurgents’ position whilst the wounded were evacuated. His citation commends him for his ‘immediate, determined and gallant action … All of this from a cavalry soldier with no previous experience as an infantry commander’. It was an extraordinary action but it served as a reminder of the enduring realities of light cavalry operations. C Squadron’s area of responsibility was handed to the Afghan National Army in September, resulting in the squadron’s early return to Germany.

A Squadron patrolling through the poppy fields in Helmand.

C Squadron; Sergeant John Rigby surveys the scene, Helmand, May 2011.

D Squadron supported the brigade in operations across all of Helmand but focused on those areas where security was still wholly a British responsibility. It had roles that might well have been immediately familiar to Captain Henry Hamilton, who led his soldiers of 6th Dragoon Guards over difficult Afghan terrain to encircle the enemy in July 1880: D Squadron's tasks included flank protection and rapid encirclement of the enemy. The squadron was equipped with thirty-one Warthogs, a vehicle requiring the use of fundamental tank skills. The Warthog was better armoured than the Viking used by B Squadron three years earlier and was armed with heavy machine guns and grenade launchers. The squadron was most often used to deliver specialist Brigade Reconnaissance Force troops with considerable shock action right into the heart of insurgent positions, then staying to encircle the enemy and provide mounted firepower to dismounted soldiers. Arguably it was this deployment to Afghanistan in which the regiment as a whole began to revert to roles not so dissimilar to those held before it was equipped with tanks. From 2011 onwards the regiment increasingly re-explored the ideas, tactics and techniques about how cavalry operated when in a true dragoon role.

The dangers associated with operations in Helmand were highlighted on 16 June 2011 when Craftsman Andrew Found, of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, was killed by an explosion near Adinza'i in the Gereshk Valley while he was leading the recovery of a Warthog that had been disabled by another roadside bomb.

By November that year, as the regiment regrouped in Fallingbostel, its men had excelled in the face of extreme hardship and some intense fighting. No part of the deployed regiment was untouched by the campaign, with more than half of the men in B Squadron having been deployed forward from Germany to Afghanistan into wide-ranging roles, including that of infantry sharpshooter. Careful planning had allowed the Pipes and Drums to remain largely intact as a band and only a few of them deployed. This meant that they could represent the regiment back home both while it was training and then on operations. They played not only at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo but also at the Basel Tattoo in Switzerland. When the regiment returned from Afghanistan, music was an essential element of the homecoming parades and in late November 2011 the Pipes and Drums proudly led a contingent of 110 men in successive marches through Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh.

D Squadron crossing the Helmand River in Warthogs, summer 2011.

When things go awry; D Squadron in the Helmand River, summer 2011.

Corporal Keith Mitchell MC with Yeomen of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, including (second from right) Mr John Rochester, Regimental Sergeant-Major of the regiment, 1992–94.

A D Squadron observation post in Helmand, summer 2011; Corporal Sean McGovern and Corporal Calvin Brown.

With the regiment safely home, attention turned to marking the forty years since the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards had been formed and thus the forty years that HM The Queen had been its Colonel-in-Chief, although she had been Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Scots Greys since the eve of her coronation. The regimental dinner held on 17 November 2011 was particularly special that year, not only because Her Majesty graciously agreed to attend but also because the regiment was allowed to hold the dinner in the State Apartments of St James's Palace, a privilege previously accorded in October 1993. Attendance was predictably strong and included the Deputy Colonel-in-Chief and His Majesty King Constantine of the

Hellenes. Past Colonels of the Regiment and Commanding Officers met the Queen before dinner in the Throne Room. That wonderful evening capped a productive year for the regiment.

Coming home, 28 November 2011; Corporal Robert McLaughlin is welcomed by his son, Ryan. (Mark Owens © MOD/Crown Copyright, 2011)

The year 2011 had been decisive for Britain’s defence forces. Shortly after the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition had been formed, following the general election in May 2010, it had announced a Strategic Defence and Security Review. This was the first major defence review for twelve years. Initial work by the army had envisaged a structure that involved five identical multi-role brigades. By 2015 army personnel were to be reduced in numbers by 7,000 to 95,500; the British Army presence in Germany would end by 2020 and the number of Challenger 2 tanks would be cut to just over 270. This would clearly impact on the regiment but its future looked relatively secure under this model because there would have been five regiments of Challenger 2s. However, there was an increasing realisation in the Ministry of Defence that the cuts in the Defence Budget, combined with spiralling costs in programmes for new equipment, meant that the figures simply did not add up. There followed a period of intense internal study to try to fund the proposed structure but, despite renewed negotiation with the Treasury, the results were consistently stark. The United Kingdom simply could not afford the army that the review had envisaged while at the same time funding a much-needed programme to keep its equipment at the forefront of technological capability.

Regimental dinner at St James's Palace, 17 November 2011; Lieutenant-Colonel M. D. Blacklock is presented to HM The Queen. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2011)

This led to a second round of planning, entitled 'Army 2020', in which nothing was to be regarded as sacrosanct in the whirl of options that were put on the table. It quickly became clear that the Royal Armoured Corps would have to reduce in size and that amalgamations would probably therefore be necessary. Having last amalgamated in 1971, the regiment looked vulnerable; the possibility of amalgamation with the Queen's Dragoon Guards was considered. It was also apparent that at least a third of the regiments of the Royal Armoured Corps would lose their tanks and be re-roled to what was being termed 'light cavalry'. The tasks envisaged for light cavalry were new for the 21st century but entirely compatible with the roles that the regiment had exercised in the past. The debate regarding who would amalgamate and who would be given the light cavalry role raged for almost nine months.

Regimental dinner at St James's Palace, 17 November 2011; HRH The Duke of Kent and the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Bartholomew OBE, and officers. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2011)

The year 2012 offered soldiers the chance to refine tank skills last fully practised in 2010. As the format of the year became clear, so too did the realisation that money was so scarce that only two squadrons of tanks could be fielded for training in Canada at BATUS. Every squadron fired its tanks' guns in the spring firing camp on Bergen-Hohne ranges but thereafter only A and C Squadrons focused entirely on Challenger 2 training, while B Squadron re-roled to provide protected mobility to a dismounted infantry company. The squadron was issued with a number of AFV 432 armoured personnel vehicles, which had been re-engineered with a more powerful engine and a reliable gearbox and had been up-armoured for better protection. Called the Bulldog, this vehicle had first been introduced into service during the war in Iraq.

Suffield 2012; A Squadron take a break from firing.

Suffield 2012; B Squadron enter a mock village.

Early in 2012, cutbacks had forced the regiment to decide to disband D Squadron. The squadron held its final parade in Fallingbostel during June 2012, some eleven years after being re-formed in 2001 following the army's Type 38 experiment. Thinking that this disbandment might be permanent, it was with a sense of resignation that the regiment marched the squadron's distinctive yellow pennant off the parade square.

When it came to the final test exercises for the year, the regiment detached C Squadron to the Mercian Battle Group for training at BATUS in June and July and deployed itself as a battle group for the last exercise in August

2012. During training in 2012, the regiment had been warned for operations in Afghanistan – this time to deploy in 2013 for Operation Herrick 19. The BATUS exercise, Prairie Thunder, once again concentrated on preparing soldiers for skills that would be needed in Afghanistan. The exercise did, however, provide the opportunity to practise a minimal amount of essential tank crew proficiencies in order to keep alive a set of skills that the nation might need again in the future. For many, it seemed a high-risk approach because of the complexity of Challenger 2 and the degree to which soldiers lost skills between each period of use. As events turned out, this deployment to Canada was the last time the regiment would train in tanks for the foreseeable future; at the time, though, no one knew that.

As the regiment was taking its battle group through final preparations for Exercise Prairie Thunder, the results of the Army 2020 study were announced in London. The Chief of the General Staff set out a significantly different army structure from that foreseen in the 2011 announcement and this new structure was confirmed by the Secretary of State for Defence on 5 July 2012. All three Services had announced more significant reductions than those outlined in July 2011. By 2018, the army was to reduce its size to 82,000 regular personnel and increase the Army Reserve to 30,000. The Army Command structure would take a new shape and comprise a reaction force, an adaptable force and force troops. The only Challenger 2s would be in the three armoured regiments allocated to each of the three brigades in the reaction force. This reduction in the size of Britain’s armoured forces would mean a 40 per cent cut in the number of Challenger 2s to an estimated 200 tanks, while the adaptable force would have three new light cavalry regiments. The overall impact was that the Royal Armoured Corps would have to lose three regiments in the process of forming the new structure.

By the time the regiment came off the Canadian prairie it knew that it was not going to be amalgamated but that, as part of the final withdrawal from Germany, it would be moved to Leuchars in Scotland, re-roled to light cavalry and equipped initially with the Jackal light armoured wheeled fighting vehicle. Although no firm date was given for the move, all indications were that 2015 should be taken as a planning date. It was great news that the regiment would return to Scotland for the first time since it had closed down its squadron in Edinburgh in 1973 but for those in Germany it was a joy tinged with a degree of sadness after so many illustrious years’ service in tanks. There had been much work carried on behind the scenes to ward off amalgamation, including some high-level discussions by the Regimental Council with the CGS. It was eventually recognised that to lose Scotland's senior and most high-profile regiment as the referendum on Scottish independence approached could be politically unwise and the new role, combined with a move to Scotland, seemed a tidy and natural solution.

Following the pattern of 2011, the regiment re-formed for operations during the early months of 2013 and spent the spring and summer training for deployment. Unlike their role two years earlier, the Pipes and Drums were fully integrated back into their squadrons and deployed where they could also deliver an extra boost to tactical operations through their musical talents. The regiment was to arrive in Afghanistan at a time when plans to hand over security to the Afghan National Security Forces were much advanced. The Afghan National Security Forces were completely in the lead, with British troops acting as mentors and advisors in the background to protect vital British interests, infrastructure and equipment. There was no need envisaged for soldiers with 'armoured skills' in Helmand; thus, for its third deployment, the regiment was posted to a terrain and a role which would have been familiar to 6th Dragoon Guards during 1879–80. It was sent to the capital, Kabul, 153 kilometres west of Jellalabad, and the men were employed on patrols, escort duty, protection of lines of communication and protection of bases. Training prior to deployment concentrated on acquiring and refining these skills, as well as getting to grips with some updated equipment. In order to move about the crowded city and its environs the regiment turned its efforts to train on yet another new armoured vehicle, this time a recently deployed four-wheeled protected patrol vehicle called Foxhound. It could be argued that this was the moment the regiment actually started to operate in a true light cavalry role, well before it was to reform again and be required to operate as a light cavalry regiment.

The regiment deployed via Camp Bastion, where there was an opportunity to practise one more time all the skills it had learned. In late August 2013 the regiment reached Kabul, which, divided by a range of hills, is spread across a great bowl in the mountains. The capital had grown considerably since British troops had first arrived there in 1839 and was estimated to be rapidly burgeoning to a population of over five million. Its dusty, dirty, noisy and unkempt streets were often gridlocked with traffic of every kind, from trucks and buses to people and camels. A Squadron was given responsibility for protecting international mentors at the new Afghan National Army Officer Academy – the so-called ‘Sandhurst in the Sand’. It was located in Qargha and ensured the security and basic facilities of the camp to enable the British, Australian, New Zealand, Danish and Norwegian instructors to start the first full course to be run. C and Headquarter Squadrons were based in Camp Souter, in the city, from which they provided transport and administrative support to the 200-odd UK personnel based across Kabul.

Whilst the environment of Kabul was relatively benign, threats were nonetheless present. At the end of October 2013 A Squadron suffered an ‘insider attack’ against a joint security foot patrol. In this incident, a soldier of the Afghan National Army opened fire on NATO troops. An Australian corporal and a New Zealand sergeant received gunshot wounds but through the quick reactions of the rest of the patrol the Afghan assailant was shot dead and no more damage was done. The shooting had a much more lasting impact on relationships with the Afghan National Army and the squadron had to work hard to rebuild the trust that had inevitably been fractured.

During the winter of 2013/14, the number of suicide attacks in the city began to rise as the Taleban attempted to influence the outcome of the 2014 presidential elections. This was a threat to be constantly negotiated by C Squadron during over 700 patrols. Throughout the tour, the Pipes and Drums were able to offer an immense enhancement to the diplomatic ‘toolbox’ available to both Britain and NATO in the city. They were used to great effect supporting Headquarters of the International Security Assistance Force in the centre of the diplomatic zone at events ranging from the political to the sporting. They played regularly at the Headquarters’ Sunday Memorial Service as well as flying to Helmand to perform at the US Marine Corps’ 238th birthday.

Far away in Fallingbostel, on 19 November 2013, without great ceremony but nonetheless in a significant moment, the Rear Operations Group piped the last Challenger 2 out of Wessex Barracks. At the same time, the group took possession of the first Jackal vehicles in preparation for the regiment’s new role. It also had a great deal to do with making initial plans for the regiment’s move to Scotland, since the relocation to Leuchars in 2015 was by then a reality. The regiment arrived safely back in Fallingbostel in mid-

February 2014 to find that the Rear Operations Group had arranged a suitable welcome home and it was the Deputy Colonel-in-Chief who took the medal parade in late February.

On return from leave, the first task for the regiment was to parade through Glasgow and then Edinburgh on 3 and 4 April 2014 in its Operation Herrick formation. Advantage was also taken of being in Edinburgh to hold a thanksgiving service in the Canongate Kirk, the regimental church. Then, on 8 April 2014, the regiment re-formed into the Light Cavalry structure of five squadrons: Headquarter Squadron, three Sabre Squadrons (A, B and C) and Support Squadron (D). This was a welcome return for D Squadron, which had been suspended two years earlier. The summer of 2014 was spent getting to know the Jackal – a vehicle open to the elements and lightly armoured, with a crew of four and able to mount a range of medium weapons, from .5-inch machine guns to the grenade launchers that D Squadron had used on the Warthog in the summer of 2011. There was much training to be done on new tactics and techniques and, to lead this, a reconnaissance regiment officer from 9th/12th Lancers, Major Bill Minards, was posted to take command of A Squadron. The regiment also gathered together the Regimental Association and families over the weekend of 20–22 June for what would be the last Waterloo Day in Fallingbostel. The 199th anniversary of the battle was celebrated with Highland Games, an All Ranks' Party and events in each of the messes. Turnout on this occasion was strong, with relations of serving soldiers and members from across the Regimental Association taking advantage of the opportunity to visit the regiment for what was to be the last occasion of its type to be held in Germany.

A Squadron; Trooper Mark McKenna looks over the Afghan National Defence University site, Qargha, September 2013.

The end of an era as the last Challenger 2 tank is piped out of Wessex Barracks, Fallingbostel, by Corporal Gary Mowbray, 19 November 2013. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2013)

By early 2014 the regiment was well advanced in its preparations for Army 2020’s light cavalry role. When perceived through the spectrum of previous roles exercised by the regiment and its antecedents, light cavalry in 2014 seemed not to be quite as new or revolutionary as perhaps it did to the authors of the Army 2020 study. Indeed, 2012 and 2013 contain plenty of examples of the regiment undertaking operations that would befit a dragoon, yet throughout that period it was considered a heavy tank regiment. Regarding this from the career perspective of a soldier who in early 2014 had just completed his twenty-two years of service, the regiment had deployed on operations eight times. It had fought in tanks, taking Challenger 2 to Iraq on Operation Telic. It had delivered Peace Support and Peace Enforcement in the Balkans, both mounted and dismounted. It had fought tough counter-insurgencies both from under armour and on foot in Iraq, and also in Afghanistan, where the terrain had been deemed unsuitable for tanks. Most soldiers had deployed on every one of these operations, totalling some four years in various theatres, during which two years were spent in intense fighting, the remaining period fortunately having proved to be a little more peaceful.

In the two and a half decades bridging the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, the regiment has probably undergone more changes of role and experienced more uncertainty over its future than at any comparable period of time in its long history. Changes of role and uncertainty are of course nothing new – although a long historical perspective is necessary in order to appreciate just how much, as Alphonse Karr wrote in 1849, ‘plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose’ (the more things change, the more they are the same). The regiment began as two regiments of horse (heavy cavalry) and one of dragoons (mounted infantry); it then became three regiments of dragoons in the period when dragoons had become heavy cavalry; in the mid-19th century, one of those regiments became a hybrid – a heavy cavalry regiment dressed, and intended to function, as light cavalry. Subsequently, the three regiments fought both mounted and dismounted during what was at that time the greatest and bloodiest war in history, the First World War. Then, required to relinquish their horses, and following the first amalgamation, the two regiments became adept at deploying in a large variety of armoured fighting vehicles.

Qargha in winter; part of a C Squadron patrol in a civilian armoured vehicle (CAV), December 2013.

Throughout its history the regiment has shown flexibility in roles which, despite its various titles, have been illustrative of how the British Army has had constantly to adapt to meet new challenges. The guise of light cavalry was propounded in the Army 2020 study for just this sort of reason. The British government remained determined that the United Kingdom was to remain a global player but it wished to be able to influence events before they occurred. It had been argued that operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were proving too costly – as a result of having allowed a situation to develop after the initial event that required massive effort to rectify. As North Africa appeared to have emerged from both the ‘Arab Spring’ and post-colonial dictatorships and as events were unfolding in Crimea and the Ukraine there was ample evidence to suggest the type of political and military challenges that lay ahead. The French-led operations in Mali in 2012 and in the Central African Republic late in 2013 had highlighted with ample clarity the tactical necessity for lighter, wheeled, armoured vehicles in those circumstances.

Homecoming parade in Glasgow; the Drum Major, Sergeant Thomas Pride, 3 April 2014. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2014)

Lieutenant-Colonel Ben Cattermole MBE, the Commanding Officer, leads the parade through Edinburgh, 4 April 2014. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2014)

MCFARLANE

Welcome Home! Trooper Colin Qua with potential recruits, son Harley and nephew Colden, in George Square, Glasgow, 3 April 2014. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2014)

In the future the regiment will continue to have to be as effective mounted and dismounted as ever dragoons were in the past. It will continue to operate with the same versatility, swiftness and shock action to provide support to the infantry as it has always done and, while many of the challenges of the past remain little changed in the present, the environment in which they have to be confronted has certainly altered. In future, soldiers will expect to remain connected to the megabytes of data that are now available through satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles and modern communications. A new and essential skill will be the ability to sip from this fire hydrant of information and then, as before, to discard the irrelevant and package the essential for decision makers faster than the enemy can. The Jackal may not be encased with the armour of a tank but with a four-man crew, long-distance endurance, the ability to mount a wide range of equipment and with a 360° weapons potential it is most surely an indication that the requirements of cavalry have changed very little over time. In its light cavalry role the regiment will be able to deliver substantial firepower with unparalleled accuracy, to manoeuvre fast and effectively, to mass for effect, to carry complex digital sighting and communications systems and to be an electrical power hub for dismounted infantry. It can probably be predicted with certainty that the Jackal will eventually go the way of both the horse and the main battle tank as the nature and type of warfare and deployment required of the British cavalry soldier change again. In the future, that soldier must continue to adapt, as he has adapted for more than three centuries, in order to survive and to confront and defeat the enemies of his Sovereign and his country.

WATERLOO
ROYAL SCOTS DRAGOON GUARDS

Supacat Jackal armoured reconnaissance vehicle. (© MOD/Crown Copyright 2008)

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Scotland for Ever! (detail) by Lady Butler. (Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery) UK/Bridgeman Images)

Challenger 2 tank during training at Bergen-Hohne, Germany, 2000.

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